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VANDELEUR

VOL. I.

LONDON :  
PRINTED BY SAMUEL BENTLEY,  
Dorset Street, Fleet Street.

VANDELEUR;  
OR,  
ANIMAL MAGNETISM.  
A NOVEL.

Ye shall have miracles, ay, sound ones too,  
Seen, heard, attested, everything but true.  
*Veiled Prophet.*

IN THREE VOLUMES.

VOL. I.

LONDON:  
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1836.





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## P R E F A C E.

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WHEN I first determined upon writing a tale of fiction as a resource against “leisure hours” — those mental vampires which suck out all the health of fitful occupation—I was particularly desirous of fixing upon an entirely new subject. It is said that our every motive is of a compound nature, but as far as I have been able to analyse my motive for this, I can find no ingredient but the one of simple and unmixed humility ; that is, as much humility as may be consistent with writing at all in these days. I am aware that as a good housewife is said to

“ Gar auld claes look ’maist as weel’s the new,”

so a very skilful writer can dress up a threadbare subject so tastefully, that if it had itself

the power of speech it would cry out, “Why this is none of I!” But as my humility whispered to me that my right hand might not possess that cunning, I endeavoured to find out a subject which should “win by rareness.” I first ran through the catalogue of the passions—it would not do, they have been “torn to tatters.” Not a character could I fancy, from the hired bravo to the gentle swain withering in secrecy and silence beneath the shade on his mistress’s eye-brow, without perceiving, as I looked behind me through the ghosts of departed novels, the *double* of my incipient hero. Now, as Peter Schlemihl owed his notoriety to the loss of his own natural and proper shadow, I very reasonably apprehended that a hero with a double would at once “be laid”—aside, and that by the most charitable ;—I therefore abandoned the passions as being—out of date.

I thought for a moment of the manners and customs of artificial life ; but they have been painted, described, caricatured, lampooned, and

dished up in so many different forms for the public taste, that not only is “the boudoir” itself as familiar to the vulgar eyes as the sign upon the windows of their own circulating libraries, but every lamp and every lustre belonging thereto is nightly burned in effigy in their own “squalid parlours.” So that really, unless by having recourse to the cuisine itself, I should not now know how to cater to the appetites of folk so greedy after “*high living*.” Then for the converse of the human picture, the lower Irish, who live professedly “by their ways and their *manes* ;” has that subject not been exhausted between open enemies and *nominal lovers* until their own orthography, if not pronunciation, becomes correct, and the *means* being gone, their *ma-nes* alone remain? Thus, between ghosts and gourmands, the spirit and the flesh, I was nearly scared altogether from my undertaking, when an opportune visit to Paris, by introducing “animal magnetism” to my notice, suggested to me that the point I

sought “might lie between”—it professing to be that mysterious point between mind and matter, too material in its effects to be all mind, and too subtile to be all matter !

Seriously, a particular circumstance brought the subject under my consideration in a very striking and a very startling point of view ; and if the reference I have given must not necessarily prove more satisfactory than any assertion from an anonymous writer, I assure my readers that “ I could a tale unfold,” the slightest word of which would justify me for making the theory the foundation of *a novel* ! —Still, justification falls so far short of approbation, and acquittal of applause, that I had no sooner attained the object of my ambition—an unhacknied subject, than I began to fear that it was *too* foreign to English sympathies, and that I should only draw upon myself that ridicule with which the subject has hitherto been treated here. Against this, the only defence I have to offer (without again



referring to the testimony of foreign but enlightened nations) is, that since a learned body has not disdained to make animal magnetism a subject of investigation, surely it should not be considered as beneath the dignity of a novel. But a truce to hopes and fears—to arguments and reasonings ; I have launched my little bark on the tide of public opinion, and all I can say now in its favour will indeed be talking to the winds. The public breath alone can swell my sails, and as I have left the cape of *good hope* far behind me, I now equally dread the dead calm of neglect, or the storms of harsh criticism, and put my trust in the *trade winds* ; praying, that instead of “blasts from hell” to damn my humble venture, they may prove “airs from heaven” to waft me “unto the wished-for haven of my bliss.”



# V A N D E L E U R.

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## CHAPTER I.

'Tis not the painted canvass I admire,  
However curiously the hues are blent ;  
I seek the magic touch of living fire,  
That needs no guide to tell us what is meant.

ANONYMOUS.

MY friends and acquaintances consider me particularly deficient in what is commonly called “a taste for drawing;” which “taste” being rather prevalent in our family, the imputed want of it has been a source of not unfrequent mortification to me in my younger days. The half pettish, half contemptuous exclamation, “Oh no ! not to *her*, *she* does not care for it, *she* has no taste for drawing,” of some young

companion who had just suffered a pretty sketch to be wrested with gentle violence from her hands, and by thus excluding one poor luckless wight from the privilege of seeing it, at once affected displeasure, and gave permission to have it shown to all others, still rings in my ear; and I see myself seated at a little distance from the speakers, with book in hand, over the blazing fire, and shaking the foot that lay over the other, with all the nonchalance I could assume, sufficiently conscious of my own moral deficiency on the subject not to challenge the declaration made against me, yet sufficiently indignant at the wanton affront, to feel my cheek colour as much as the previous good offices of the fire would permit to become visible. And so poignant was my feeling on these occasions, that, when afterwards emancipated from the sweet thralls of home and childhood, I determined to try whether it was not possible for me, by industry and perseverance, to overcome this plague-spot in my education: but no, it would not do.

I tried various kinds of drawing and painting, but never finished a piece that did not cause me more blushes, for falling so far short of my own conceptions, than even my former unambitious ignorance had done. Some, indeed, exclaimed in astonishment at the progress I made, and were even beginning to retract their former opinions of my deficiency: but it was all in vain—a painter I was not to be. I threw by my palette and my colours in utter disgust at my own attempts, and my friends once more triumphed in their superior judgment. Well, these days have long gone by, and I have passed on in my riper age as one “not fond of painting:” and yet, strange to say, I do not think it is possible that any individual can have felt more intense pleasure from the art than I have done in my time; but then it was in my own way, and at very rare intervals. I have stolen away at times and hours when I knew public and private collections of paintings to be least frequented by others, for the purpose of giving myself up to



all the dreamy delight of a romance read in some speaking eye, or some tragedy in the haughty and revengeful lip. And if this blending of story and of painting was a sin against the latter, I can only say as I have said before, and as others have said for me, that "I have no taste for drawing."

Of all the paintings, whether compositions or portraits, that have ever arrested my fancy or my feelings, I never remember to have been more irresistibly interested by any, than by three which are now (at least were, a very short time since,) to be seen in the picture-gallery of the Duchess of ——, in ——shire. They boast no foreign name, and are evidently of the modern school; but there is so much of truth, of nature—that undefinable something about them, that I was impressed at once with the conviction that the subject was not merely fanciful. But if already I was inclined to admire them as, at least, masterpieces of very cunning workmanship from the pencil of an amateur, (as the artist was

described in the catalogue to be,) most assuredly, when circumstances afterwards brought to my knowledge the outline of their history, with permission to weave it into a little tale, it did not lessen my interest in them, or dispose me to behold them with a more critical eye.

The first of the three portraits which thus engaged my attention, was that of a young girl, apparently about fifteen or sixteen years of age, and a boy somewhat younger, whose arms fondly entwined around each other, as they appeared to stroll along, gave one the idea of what children born to our first parents before their fall might have been. You saw at a glance that they were not lovers; for, besides the early youth of the boy, there was a character about their love and their familiarity, that can be described best by negatives. It was free from all appearance of anxiety, free from all emotion, free from any of "love's delicious agonies." They looked as if they had just fallen from heaven together, and knew nothing yet of the ills of earth. Be-

sides, they were extremely like each other. Her eyes, indeed, were of a softer blue, and her ringlets, though dark as the raven's wing, were more silky and more luxuriant than his, and her lips were plumper and more round; still, there was the indescribable family likeness strongly impressed, and I knew that they were brother and sister. It seemed to be some interesting moment in their young lives; for the girl's countenance betrayed a sweet and joyous consciousness, as her beautiful forget-me-not eyes encountered those of her brother, which looked down upon them in return with an expression of arch affection. The scene, too, was one that might have served for a representation of paradise. It was a rich and glowing sunset; and the fair artist, who I afterwards discovered was an Englishwoman by descent and birth, must certainly have caught those glowing colours from an Italian sky, or else have seized in happy hour, with the inspiration of genius,

one of those rare and delicious evenings in an English summer that are sometimes sent to us in mind of heaven. She always declared it was the latter.

The second picture presented the same lovely female figure in lineaments that could not be mistaken ; but, gracious Heaven ! how changed ! Where was the blooming cheek ? the smiling eyes ? the halo of unbroken, unfearing happiness ?—All, all were changed or gone. The look of very early youth indeed still lingered there ; but it was only to lend a heightened effect to the death-like hue of her attenuated countenance, and to give a yet wilder animation to the agony it expressed. She was dressed in the most costly fashion, and her arms loaded with ornaments ; all of which formed a striking and painful contrast to her air of desolation and supplication, as, with upraised eyes, and hands that seemed grasped together in convulsive agony, she knelt at the feet of another lady, of

whom a beautiful side-view was presented. The scene was a saloon, evidently of Continental magnificence.

The third picture was the interior of a cottage-porch, with a glimpse of a wild Alpine landscape. Sitting within the porch was the same lady, but no longer young, and a gentleman, who might be some ten years older. He was not the hero of the first piece ; for the eyes of the boy were blue like his sister's, while those of the present portrait were of a rich black, more deep than bright, as they are wont to be when subdued by sorrow and anxiety. The air of the gentleman was strikingly noble,—I should have said military, but there was nothing in his dress to confirm this idea.

The wild agony which the countenance of the female in the second picture expressed, was here softened down to a calm and heavenly resignation and pensiveness. The brow and even the cheek were still of marble whiteness ; but it seemed to speak of sorrow that had nearly passed



away, and only left those enduring traces to mark where it once had been. She was still eminently lovely ; and although from having the first picture still before you, in which she seemed a creature invested with perpetual youth, health, and happiness, you could not fail to perceive that Time must now have passed his cold wing over her, yet it was only that circumstance which seemed to remind you of it. Had you seen her now for the first time, her age would never have come into your imagination, at once led captive by her loveliness and peculiar air of resignation. Her jet black hair was uncovered, yet gave no air of coquetry, or of a lingering after other days ; for it was so inartificially arranged as to be evidently a matter of no moment to her, and you knew at once from her whole air and appearance, that it was rather in utter disregard to personal adornment, than with any view to admiration, that she wore no head-dress but that with which Nature had provided her. Her hair was entirely brushed away from

her temples at each side, and loosely folded up behind. Her head was beautiful ; it required no adept in phrenology to admire it—Nature asserted her own power without the rules of art ; and although ignorance might be unable to trace the cause of its own spontaneous admiration to beautiful proportions and noble developement, the pleasing effect was not the less felt. There was something in every line of that head that diffused an air of irresistible interest around her. Her form, too, was lovely ; though few besides herself would have stood the test of her dishabille. She was wrapt in a loose white muslin robe ; which if the worst costume that could have been selected for effect in painting, gave, to my mind, perhaps for that very reason, an air of truth and reality to the whole, that weighed more with me (anti-connoisseur as I have avowed myself) than the most judicious management of light and shade could have done.

The lady was in the very act of withdrawing

her hand (and it was a hand of exquisite symmetry, where youth still lingered in round and dimpled smoothness) from the arm of the gentleman, where you saw, or perhaps only felt, that it had rested the moment before, in earnest persuasion, but was hastily removed, as his hand (also still suspended) was about to be laid upon it. She did not look indignant, still less haughty, and no colour had rushed to that bloodless cheek ; but her whole air was that of startled matron delicacy, and her eyes met his with a look of gentle, but soul-touching reproof, in which was mingled a ray of affection, such as I have never seen equalled upon earth. It was the love of an angel for a mortal soul ; it was the love of a purified spirit for one which was not yet all of heaven.

The gentleman was evidently rebuked in her presence ; yet it was rather as a mortal might feel in the presence of a being of a higher sphere, than the angry humiliation of one erring creature before another. His whole manner be-

trayed a mixture of sorrow and adoration. I was utterly at a loss to conjecture what the subject of this picture could be, or in what relation or position the parties stood to each other ; and I became so deeply interested in them altogether, that when I was some time after favoured with their history, I took a considerable journey for the sole purpose of looking once more upon those countenances, with which I felt so intimately acquainted ; and I have since sat for hours together gazing upon them, until I have fancied that the lips absolutely moved, and gave utterance to the feelings that I now learned had been working in the hearts of the originals. And in filling up the outlines of the story, I have at times been almost persuaded that I myself heard the words uttered, and the sentiments expressed, which I only received at second-hand.

Partly perhaps in the hope of inspiring my readers with something of the same in-

terest that was thus awakened in my own breast, I have selected the subject of the first picture for the opening scene of the little history I have undertaken to present them with.

## CHAPTER II.

At intervals some bird from out the brakes  
Starts into voice a moment—then is still :  
There seems a floating whisper on the hill ;  
But that is fancy, for the starlight dew  
All silently their tears of love distill,  
Weeping themselves away till they infuse  
Deep into Nature's breast the spirit of her hues.

BYRON.

It was one of the loveliest evenings in the loveliest month of an English summer. The day had been sultry, bright and beautiful ; birds had been even clamorous in melody, vying, as it were, with each other in songs of praise and gratitude for the pleasure it afforded them : trees looked darker and richer from the repose of their thick foliage ; rare flowers had confidingly expanded their delicate petals



to the genial glow that was abroad ; and there seemed to be more light in the world than we are accustomed to enjoy. Nature was not only smiling, but joyously laughing all around. It seemed as if the very fishes, the dullest and coldest of organised beings, grew reasoning creatures upon such a day, and supposing that its influence must be felt by all, even by the tyrant man, forsook the safety of their protecting element, and ventured to the surface of the waters to take their share in the universal joy. In short, it had been one of those days when the sun and our earth are evidently in good humour with each other. He smiled brightly on her, and she repaid him a thousand-fold with all her charms. Yet that day had passed away, —ay, even as the brightest dreams of youth ! It had passed ; yet, like the “sober sadness” of the breast that once beat highest to those bright hopes, the very evening of such a day was worth the noontide of any other. The warmer beams indeed were gone ; yet their delightful influence



still was felt in the soft, balmy, genial temperature that remained. The birds, the bees, the butterflies had all vanished; yet even of them one would have said some soft, impalpable, undefinable charm still lingered in the dreamy, undulating hum, which, though gradually becoming fainter and fainter, was still about; and if some delicate flowers had closed their bosoms from the breath of evening, others there were, and perhaps the sweetest, which gave out their fragrance with less coyness now.

The evening was lovely everywhere; but perhaps there was scarcely a scene more calculated to receive and display its delicious influence to advantage, than Beauton Park.

Beauton Park had been for many generations the family mansion and principal residence of an old English family, of wealth and local respectability, but of whose members none had ever risen, or seemed desirous to rise, to the peerage, or to any particular eminence in church or state. They were good easy folk, whose harmless

ambition was satisfied with the glory that was acquired for their country, independent of any exertions of theirs ; and while they paid their taxes punctually, and religiously kept up what they called the good old English sports and customs, they conceived that they had as good a right to bask in the beams of that glory, as any other well-born Englishman. It need scarcely be added, that they were not a family remarkable for talent ; yet, as their friends and neighbours sometimes were heard to declare, “ they were no fools ; ” and being a remarkably handsome race, the gentlemen, whose habits of locomotion (though still very limited) were yet more extended than those of the females, not unfrequently made a conquest of some faded fashionable, either at a race-ball in some country-town, where she had retired to rusticate for a season, or at some watering-place, whither she had repaired in the hope of reviving her faded roses. But somehow it was remarked, that these marriages, though they served to prevent

the family from falling into utter rusticity, seldom turned out happily.

The Evelyns, though good-humoured, and, on the whole, well-disposed and kind-hearted men, had too much of old English — what shall I call it? *boorishness*? or *dignity*? (my readers may choose the term,) to be guided much by the fancies of their wives; and although as “gay young bachelors” they thought it only reasonable, and right, that they should themselves see a little of life, at Tunbridge or at Bath, still the moment they had slipped their necks into the marriage-noose, being downright, well-meaning folk, they could see no further business they could have, beyond the county-town where the assizes were held, or the most extended run that Reynard was pleased to favour them with. Still less, of course, could they conceive any justifiable reason for their ladies’ wish to rove; and she who married with the idea of favouring her handsome, but country-bred husband, with her company during the

summer months, enlivened by the presence of a thousand-and-one dear friends, in succession from the metropolis, on condition of his making her a handsome present every spring for her London expenses, invariably found herself most wofully mistaken ; and although the first year's refusal might be accompanied only by a laughing and good-humoured determination, the second generally was ushered in with a few nationally characteristic asseverations, that put an end to the lady's hopes, if not to her resentment, on the subject for ever.

This Blue-Beard custom of the Evelyns seemed to be a sort of family heir-loom,—a kind of hereditary principle, which each in succession held as sacred and inviolate as the laws of the Medes and Persians were held, and perhaps for no better reason than the good old English maxim, to “do as our fathers have done before us.” What a blessing it is that this imbecile maxim is going out of fashion ! Innovation may in some cases be dangerous ; but who never

ventures can never win. To adhere blindly to the habits of our forefathers, merely because they were such, is not only to presuppose them “the wisest, virtuousest, discreetest, best,” but, even giving full scope to those filial feelings, it is presupposing likewise, that everything else around us—in fact every circumstance—has continued in precisely the same situation as when our predecessors acted in such or such a manner, or laid down such or such rules ; (by the bye, I agree with Lord Byron in hating “invariable rules ;”) and this I believe no one is prepared to assert on any subject. The alternative is, that we are shutting our own eyes, to be guided by charts given us by persons who never trod the path, themselves : for it is no longer the same path, if new turnings and new windings have been made since their day ; so that pitfalls may now be yawning, where once were “ways of pleasantness, and paths of peace.”

To return to the Evelyns : it must be ac-



known, that if ever gentlemen could be excusable, (and far be it from me to say that they could,) for immuring their wives in the country, and denying them the pleasures of the metropolis, the proprietors of Beauton Park might surely put in their claims for forgiveness. That very extensive demesne, situated in one of the southern counties of England, seemed to contain within itself almost all that the heart of man could desire, or woman either. The dwelling-house, to which frequent and judicious additions had been made, was a noble mansion : it stood upon a gentle slope, which at a little distance became more decidedly elevated, so that the house was sheltered and shut in on three sides by deep hanging woods, and the fourth looked out upon a splendid lawn, studded with noble inhabitants, both animate and inanimate ; for the beautiful deer were so numerous, as sometimes, in the distance, amongst the tall trees, to be mistaken for underwood.

As if to make amends to the ladies of the

family for their seclusion from gayer haunts, and perhaps not a little to escape the trouble themselves, the proprietors of Beauton Park generally permitted their wives to exercise unlimited control over the ornamental parts of the demesne ; and the result, as may be supposed, was at all times whimsical, and frequently very beautiful:—deep-tangled walks, unlooked-for glades, “mosques beside Grecian temples,” deserts in the very bosom of forests, and not unfrequently *jets d’eaux* on the top of a favourite hill ; in short, every variety that taste, or caprice, or both united, could suggest, was realised there. There was at the southern side of the mansion a gentle gradual declivity before the bolder hill on that side began to rise again ; and as one of the windows of a summer sitting-room looked out upon this side, it was soon made to breathe of all the mingled sweets of Araby, and the humble green in which Nature had decked it was exchanged for the many-coloured parterre. A sort of little road or narrow



strip of valley, that ran between this declivity and the higher chain of hills, which formed a sort of amphitheatre round the house, was closely planted with dark evergreens, and sweet flowering shrubs, which blending in gradation with the woods that clothed the hills to their very base, gave to the descent a strange and almost mysterious termination ; the evergreens being planted so close that their tops seemed to form the level of the little valley. Amongst them and the overhanging wood, with which they mingled, ran paths so varied and so devious, as not only to be called, but really to be worthy of the name of, Labyrinth ; and not unfrequently have persons, who came to visit a place so abundant in beauties, expressed their very rational astonishment, how the “Cynthia of the minute” could ever tire in a place of such variety : for of course the domestic grievances of the Evelyns, like all other domestic grievances, soon escaped from their only legitimate bounds—namely, their own bosoms ; I will not even say—firesides.

The gentleman who was in possession of Beauton Park, by right of inheritance, at the time in which this story commences, differed very little, either in his virtues, or his faults, or even in his family circumstances, from those who had gone before him. He was one of the best and handsomest among them, and had, in his turn, picked up a fair and delicate wife, from the hotbed of fashionable life, who had come to seek the renovation of a fragile constitution at the springs of Bath. She was an earl's daughter, and if her fortune was small, she was reputed to be "extremely talented;" and although, for some unaccountable reason, that advantage did not seem to atone, in the eyes of her London admirers, for other deficiencies, still it was a circumstance very likely to render her more difficult of access, and therefore, by human perversity, a more desirable acquaintance in the eyes of unsophisticated youths from the country. When, therefore, she condescended to smile upon the extremely

handsome and wealthy master of Beauton Park, can it be wondered at, that the flattered Corydon knelt at her feet, and only rose on her consenting that he should lead her to the altar ?

Lady Alicia was, however, really a talented person, and naturally amiable ; but somehow in those days (fifty years since) people did not know how to manage talented daughters. First-rate and extraordinary talents will, of course, at all times, and in all circumstances, make their own way ; but how many minds, a degree or two lower in the scale, have, for want of judicious culture, and sufficient aliment and exercise, withered, and stagnated into dull pedantry, or turned aside into some wild and fearful paths, even although

“ The light that led astray was light from heaven ! ”

And surely, when such were the results, it is not to be wondered at that men conceived a horror, and even a terror, of what were called “ learned ladies.” It is at least, I think, a much more rational way of accounting for their having

entertained such feelings towards them, than the common, and to me ever absurd, explanation of *envy* ; ay, even though some specimens of the nobler sex, ignorant enough themselves to make it credible, may have shrugged their silly shoulders, and generously pleaded guilty to the charge for the whole fraternity.

However, the kind of cleverness which Lady Alicia possessed did not lead her into exactly either of those extremes. It was not brilliant enough for the one, and it was too gentle for the other ; but its fate was not to herself much better. She married Mr. Evelyn, as many others had done his ancestors, in the hope of leading him into fashionable life ; but when she found the family failing incurably strong in him, she gave up the point, determining within herself, that since he would not associate with her friends, she would not with his ; and accordingly, under the plea of delicate health, she confined herself by degrees almost entirely to her own apartments, and in sullen disappointment

broke off nearly all correspondence even with her own family.

This, to a person gifted with talents, and situated in the country as she was, might all have been very well, had she ever been taught to turn those talents to good account ; or had she even been taught the necessity of keeping them in control of any kind, in order that they might not turn upon and rend her. But she had not been taught this ; and the consequence was, that fancy and imagination, left to their own devices, soon made out food for themselves on the subject of her health, and she became a confirmed valetudinarian. The successive births of two lovely children, a boy and a girl, for a time diverted her attention from this fatal subject ; and she even undertook, as the children advanced from infancy to childhood, to be their instructress. But this could not continue long : both the children, as will sometimes happen, inherited all their mother's talents, and the boy a thousand times more. Although nearly a year



younger than his sister, he very soon proved that he required a better and more profound teacher than his lady mother.

The first symptoms that this discovery was mutual, were his visits to the dressing-room being suffered to become much fewer and shorter than heretofore; and at length Lady Alicia yielded to the truth of an opinion latterly frequently expressed by her husband in these words,—“ My dear, I think it is time I should be looking out for a tutor for that boy :” and a tutor was accordingly procured.

Most providentially, the wisest and fondest parents could not have selected one more desirable in every respect than the individual whom accident threw in the way of these very incompetent and heedless judges. Mr. Mason was at once a profoundly learned, and a most conscientious man.

Although long habits of seclusion in the haunts of a college, joined to a peculiar simplicity of character, had left him as ignorant

of the ways of the world, (the modern world, as he termed it,) as an infant, they had rendered him, perhaps, but the more earnest in the duties he had undertaken to perform. He poured into the delighted ears of his intelligent pupil, not only the erudition of the schools, but liberal, high-minded, and extended principles of right and wrong—such as, falling upon congenial soil, seemed calculated to make the promising youth, in time, a good as well as a great man. They became almost immediately attached to each other in no common degree. The Christian simplicity of the good old man's character, though it never amounted to the ludicrous, was yet sufficient to make him conscious and reserved in the society of strangers ; and because he felt that his own philosophic and high sentiments would not be understood by them, and yet knew no others with which to replace them, he generally remained perfectly silent, and by many was considered stupid, if not ignorant. How delightful was it, then, for him to find, in



the lovely child now committed to his care; one who could not only tolerate his noble peculiarities, but into whom it was at once his duty and delight to instil all his own high aspirations, after the only valuable knowledge,—namely, moral good in its most extended sense !

Of women, Mr. Mason was particularly shy ; not from contempt or dislike, but simply because all he had ever read or heard of them, added to his own experience, (which consisted almost wholly in their exclusion from all seats of learning,) caused him to believe that they could have no feeling in common with him; and if, in his younger days, he had ever entertained other hopes, they were so long gone by, that he felt now as much apart from women, as if they were another order of beings. Indeed, he scarcely expected to be able to make himself intelligible to them, even in the common civilities of the table, and was therefore most agreeably surprised to find Mr. Evelyn's house nearly exempt from their presence ; as, by the

time he became domesticated in it, Lady Alicia had entirely abjured the lower apartments, and took even her meals alone, or in company of her little girl only. Good Mr. Mason's joy on this subject was, however, to be of short duration ; and he himself was destined to be, in part, the innocent and most unconscious cause of an accession to the female society at Beauton !

It so happened, that, since children were first given to their parents' prayers, never did two creatures love each other more fondly than did Herbert Evelyn and his sister Gertrude. They were both amiably disposed, which prevented ill humour—that bane of infantine, and indeed of mature affection ; and being the only children of the family, they were entirely dependent on each other for all their sports and all their happiness. Besides, though both were endowed with more than common intelligence, their talents were of a different order ; and the boy was very soon able to assume his sex's su-

periority over the little girl, by becoming her assistant and her champion, which established another powerful bond of interest on both sides. Under these circumstances, it is not to be supposed that when her brother became emancipated from the dressing-room, Gertrude remained very contentedly behind ; and as Lady Alicia was the least fitted, of all persons in the world, to struggle with or control a lively child, however well disposed to the task, she soon began to overlook her frequent absences, under various excuses to herself of its being good for the child's health, and a pity to deprive the boy altogether of his only companion, she having succeeded in scaring away all visiters from her house. Gertrude was but too delighted to perceive this tacit yielding to her wish for liberty, and she first began to spend the time of her brother's leisure hours in gambols with him ; then advanced to sitting on the window-sill, and watching with wistful eyes until he should be released from his lessons ; and, finally, won

by the mild and gentle countenance of the old man, she ventured into the room, and became almost as much pleased to be near him as near her brother, until at last her visits to the dressing-room became as rare as Herbert's own.

But although Lady Alicia was not unwilling to get rid of the task of teaching a little girl whose mind she had not the happy art of engaging, she soon began to feel the disagreeable vacuum which was caused by her long absence, and once more her thoughts turned entirely upon the subject of her own health. This, with a person who lived so secluded, even from the society of her own family, must soon have ended in absolute insanity ; but, before it had reached such lengths, she came to the determination of procuring some person who, whilst she listened to and sympathised in her lady's tender grievances, as part of her engagement, should at the same time act as a sort of governess or duenna to the little girl ;—that is, she was to see that her hair and dress were properly

attended to, and that she did not break her neck in her pastimes with her brother, when the *gouvernante* was not better employed in reading aloud some 'Guide to Health,' or some fashionable novel, for the relief of Lady Alicia's mental or bodily languor, as the case might be most urgent at the moment.

It may be asked why, in choosing a female companion, Lady Alicia did not endeavour to procure one who, while she was really capable of instructing the beautiful little girl in all that was befitting her sex and age, might, at the same time, have proved a rational and agreeable, if not an improving, companion to herself. Simply for this reason—that Lady Alicia loved her own ease more than anything on earth; and she had an instinctive feeling, that a well-educated and independent-minded woman would have been a troublesome associate for one so sunk in indolence, and, at the same time, with sense enough still remaining to know that better things should have been expected of her.



She sometimes knew herself to be whimsical, and unreasonable ; but as she intended to continue so, she wished for a companion who would minister to her whims, without making her ashamed of them.

On the cruel injustice to her charming child, she soothed her conscience with the recollection that Gertrude was still so young, and that when she had thus secured a person to look after her in her idle hours, she should herself be better able to attend to her accomplishments and education. Alas ! upon what grounds is it that we build so confidently on being able to resist one temptation, while we are quietly suffering ourselves to be overcome by another ? Are they not all alike, the froward offspring of our passions ; and when we yield to one, will not the others assert their equal right, with a clamour which we are sometimes fain to hush, at a sacrifice we should previously have spurned at, and which had never been heard if the first symptoms of insubordination had been subdued ?

Lady Alicia succeeded in procuring an humble companion, under the name of governess—one as humble and as well fitted for the former, as she was unfitted for the latter task; and finding no immediate ill effect from her first failure in duty to her child, she, as might be expected, felt less reluctance in yielding to the next, and the next; and so the little creature, whom Nature had gifted in no common degree, with beauty of person and intelligence of mind, was suffered to grow, like one of the neglected rose-trees in her mother's flower-garden, wild, luxuriant, and untrained—but sweet, lovely, and graceful notwithstanding.

Her father, from the very hour of his son's birth, gave all the affection that should have been divided between his children entirely to him, partly for the wise reason that he *was* his son and heir, and partly because he was *not* of the sex of his lady mother; which sex Mr. Evelyn had latterly begun to think a very troublesome part of the creation. By him,



therefore, even when his field sports, or domestic annoyances, did not call or drive him from his home, she passed totally unnoticed. Her brother, indeed, more than once mentioned his sister's capabilities, and the little cultivation they received; and Mr. Mason even found him occasionally giving her lessons himself: but if for a moment this caused the good man to fix his mild contemplative eyes upon her, as if to ask if she could be an exception to her sex, and really capable of literary acquirement, some idle freak or lively sally of the animated little girl crushed the extravagant hope in the bud, and he would turn away with a smile and a sigh, pleased that his pupil had so innocent, and to himself so improving, an occupation for his leisure hours, but grieved that it must prove so useless, where he expected it to be so beneficial. Yet, once more, let it not for a moment be supposed that Mr. Mason despised or held women in contempt: besides that he was much too mild and gentle for such a feeling, he merely

looked on them as he did on the flowers of the field or birds of the air—a beautiful species in their own nature, but of which he understood as little, and therefore left them to themselves.

It must be confessed that circumstances were still most unfavourable to the good man's recovery from his delusion upon this subject. Had he even known of Lady Alicia's talents, (latent as they may well be called,) the knowledge would have been attended with no other consequence than to make him suppose her a *lusus naturæ*, and, like all such, but the more useless and repulsive, as a heterogeneous mixture of different natures, instead of the perfection of some one, even of a lower scale in the creation. And for Miss Wilson, the *gouvernante*, if ever there was a being formed expressly to sanction and confirm his preconceived ideas, she was that one—not that she was an idiot; if she had been, he should have heard her spoken of as such, and gathered that such was not the common state of woman-

hood : she was only an automaton—an eating, drinking, sleeping, walking machine. He was not at all sure that her powers amounted to speaking, and should certainly have doubted the fact, but that he recollected to have heard his pupil more than once say that she was reading to his mamma in her dressing-room—and *his* word he could not doubt. Still, reading, albeit a wonder of another kind, did not involve a power of forming a sentence herself; and this he was obliged merely to infer from some nearly inarticulate sounds that escaped her at dinner, eked out by odd nods and wriggles, when addressed on the subject of her food,—and farther than this no one seemed inclined to venture. It was enough, however, to prove that she was not dumb. And when Mr. Mason saw others do so, he was of course obliged to accept her as a specimen of the sex. Still, that she was not a pleasing one, some instinctive feeling told him; and he kept quietly but tenaciously aloof from her, as something more inexplicable to him than all

the rest, with nothing to redeem her cold stupidity. Hate any one he could not, much less one so inoffensive ; but he always felt out of his element if any accident disturbed his regular system, and brought him more within the sphere of her attraction, or—repulsion.

But what, perhaps, was stranger still, there were not wanting those who believed the duenna to be shrewd and sensible ; others, deep and designing ; just according to their own class and order of intellect : and all this merely because she was silent, quiet, and unobtrusive ; and that it was even less odd to believe her clever, in spite of all appearances to the contrary, than to suppose that an humble companion could really be what she seemed to be, and no more ! She was, nevertheless, simply what she seemed to be—quiet, unobtrusive, and unobservant, with just enough of animal instinct remaining to know and feel herself comfortably situated, and therefore to take care to be in nobody's way, to interfere with nobody's incom-

ings or outgoings ; in short, to make herself secure of the permanence of her present abode, on the same principle as a chair or a sofa might be, in a quiet family.

I believe it is maintained by some, that we are all composed originally of the same elements, and even in exactly the same proportions ; and that it is only as external circumstances act upon our sensitive and plastic organization, that different characters are formed, according to the particular passions, powers, or talents, which, either by judicious education, or casual circumstances, are called into exercise and strengthened, whilst others are suffered to lie dormant, until finally they become to all practical purposes extinct. In this view of things, Miss Wilson might have been originally intended by nature to be more of a human being than she now appeared to be ; but in early life she was so cuffed and buffeted about, by low unprincipled parents, for appearing to understand what they did not choose that she should understand,



yet talked of openly before her, that whatever little degree of intellect she had been born with was barely sufficient to enable her to conceal it !

When death removed her parents, she was given her morsel in the house of a petty village schoolmistress, a distant relation of her own, and taught to read and write, (by dint of strokes of more kind than one,) in order that she might in time assist in teaching the other children. In this situation she still found it so inconvenient and so *unlucky* to see what she should not see, and to hear what she should not hear, that, as she had not sufficient energy to seize the opportunities afforded her of becoming a rogue,—or, in other words, not having talent enough at once to exercise and conceal them,—she adopted the much less difficult task of stifling them ; and, by a little determination and good management, she was enabled soon to render them so completely latent, that even she herself lost sight of them entirely, and soon forgot that they had



ever existed ; and by the time that a chance circumstance threw her in the way of Lady Alicia Evelyn, she was as completely passive a machine to be acted upon by the will of others, as any toady ever professed to be, but so seldom is.

Only one circumstance during the whole course of the first seven years she had vegetated at Beauton Park ever afforded the least surmise of her having even a negative will or wish of her own ; and it must be confessed that the occasion was sufficiently extraordinary ;—so much so, that previous to making the necessary claim on the reader's confidence in our veracity, it is necessary to inform him, that Miss Wilson, with all her mental deficiencies, possessed the usual complement of limbs and features ; the first duly formed the second tolerably fair, but so dead, so inanimate, so devoid of all that could inspire love from the very hope of reciprocity of feeling, that she was still Miss Wilson at some undefinable age between forty and fifty. Still,

she could never be called plain ; and stranger still, she was not essentially vulgar—that is, she was not a vulgar toady. It is not often that a very dull, very silent, perfectly undesigning and quietly self-possessed person, satisfied with their own position, will appear absolutely vulgar. It is your sensitive, aspiring, lively, anxious—ay, and clever people, who are either vulgar or—odd ; people with exquisite ears, who catch up every rich brogue and expressive intonation around them—in short, who feel themselves above their seeming, and are nervously jealous of not being recognised by others to be so. But this is only when untoward circumstances have conspired to deprive them of their natural birthright ; namely, elegance, high breeding,—manners polished as their minds, because emanating from and regulated by them ; suavity, which accommodates itself to all, because conscious that few can accommodate themselves to it ;—in short, that moral dignity which, when suffered to expand itself in congenial atmo-

spheres, acknowledges no rules but what are born of itself; and which smiles on the superficial and studied observance of conventional rules by others, as it would on the gambols of the child, who, mounted on its wooden hobby-horse, believes, because it has learned by rote all the technical expressions and attitudes appertaining to horsemanship, that it has also acquired the true spirit of the thing.

This is an inheritance to which dulness, though it may escape vulgarity, never can succeed, consigned for ever to insipid mediocrity. And hence it is, that while the cold and mediocre character, though by constant friction smoothed down to a convenient level of deportment, will on any sudden excitement or fermentation betray its inherent dross; inborn elegance, though overshadowed and obscured, will, when excited beyond the outward seeming, break out into such bright and sparkling emanations, as does the pure crystal spring when anything disturbs the scum that may have rested

on its surface. This insipid mediocrity, however, was precisely the sort of mind or manner best suited to one in Miss Wilson's situation; and so well did it carry her through her present routine of life, that it began to be observed, that a gouty old fox-hunter, whom Mr. Evelyn occasionally invited to his house with other gentlemen of the neighbourhood, looked upon her with a degree of complacency, if not of interest, which seemed to say: "Gad! I think she would make an excellent wife for a rich old fellow, who wants some one to nurse him when that d—d gout attacks him: she is so silent, and slips about so quietly." The thing was almost incredible, but so it was; and other unequivocal and not less wonderful symptoms began in time to manifest themselves.

It may be thought strange how a courtship, or even a flirtation, with Miss Wilson, who never spoke, even on her fingers, or seemed to understand when others spoke, (thanks to her early education,) could be carried on, much

less observed, or, as the saying is, “get wind ;” but everything in this world is by comparison.

Miss Wilson was one of that class of beings who are allowed to take the trouble both of making tea, and of handing it about to the company. Now, as the eye long accustomed to any one object, or even to vacancy, although it may be unconscious of its own perception, will notice any sudden change in the object or the space ; so it was observed one evening, that Miss Wilson’s chair was more constantly occupied by its fair tenant than was usual with her during tea-time, although she seemed to be indulging in an odd sort of exercise, of perpetually rising and sitting down again, without ever leaving her place. It was examined into, and found to be owing to the alertness of the old gentleman, who, according as she filled the cups, hobbled forward to receive them from her hand and distribute them ; to which she submitted with the apparent nonchalance of a high-bred lady, accustomed to receive such attentions



as her right—if high-bred ladies could by any accident be placed in such a situation, but which, in her, proceeded from that passive quiescence, which yielded to whatever seemed to be the will of others. At first this Quixotic gallantry only excited a laugh, in which the cunning old beau himself affected to join ; but when he proceeded to sitting next to her at dinner, heaping choice fruits upon her plate, and deserting the bottle once or twice to follow her to the drawing-room, people began to stare upon each other, and to shake their heads.

At last the climax came : he pursued her one evening into the shrubbery ; what passed there no one ever exactly knew ; but the old tutor, who, in taking his evening stroll, happened to encounter them, was observed to look back several times with an expression of more astonishment than his placid countenance had ever before exhibited, as if to satisfy himself that either his eyes or ears had not played him false,



and was even heard to mutter, "God preserve me ! a love-talk with her !"

This, together with a sudden change in the attentions of the gentleman, which evidently "drooped from that hour," left but little room to doubt that he had popped the question, and been—refused. It was not, however, observed that he broke his heart ; and when quizzed and questioned upon the subject, he never made other answer than, "Gad ! she's a most extraordinary woman !" with a look, and a sort of shrug, and dubious smile, which showed that he was, now at least, as much astonished himself at what had taken place, either upon her part or his own, as any of his friends could be ; and he was quite willing to leave it amongst them, to be discussed, and inquired into, if any light could be thrown upon the matter.

The lady, in the mean while, answered all raillery upon the subject with a quiet and unmeaning extension of her thin lips, which leaves

it, to this day, a matter of doubt whether her refusal proceeded from her not having understood, until it was too late, the honour that was intended for her—from her being too wise to relinquish the elegant comforts of Beauton Park for a sick room—or from her being too passive to take the trouble the change of position would necessarily entail upon her. But so the matter ended for the present, although not so its effects upon her odd machinery.

Such was the person who acted, or who was called on to act, as the governess of Miss Evelyn. From her, indeed, the young lady could learn no evil,—but what of good? Of the advantages which, notwithstanding so much was neglected, she still could not fail to derive from her refined and elegant, though selfish and indolent mother, she was also deprived before she had quite attained her fourteenth year. Lady Alicia at last fell a victim to her own valetudinarian habits, and left her lovely girl at that tender age without a friend, or almost an

acquaintance, upon earth, save those who composed her father's household. How far they were suited to superintend the developement of her mind and character, the reader may himself imagine.

One or two of Lady Alicia's nearest relatives did indeed, when the melancholy event was made known to them, offer to look out for a fashionable seminary for the young lady, and to superintend her education there ; but as Mr. Evelyn thought he had seen but too much of the effects of a fashionable education in her mother, and yet, with characteristic inconsistency, could not conceive what more could be requisite for her, than to continue the governess whom that mother had selected, he peremptorily refused to allow of their interference ; and so alienated from his innocent and beautiful child the very few even nominal friends whom her mother's whims and pride had left to her.

## CHAPTER III.

And both were young, and one was beautiful :  
And both were young, yet not alike in youth.  
As the sweet moon on the horizon's verge,  
The maid was on the eve of womanhood ;  
The boy had fewer summers, but his heart  
Had far outgrown his years.

BYRON.

Most happily for Gertrude, under all the disadvantages of her position, her brother and she continued to love each other with an affection, that indeed "grew with their growth, and strengthened with their strength." The years that had passed over them, while they left Gertrude the amiable, enthusiastic, lovely, and loving being which she had come from the hand of Nature, had mellowed and blended down every

exuberance, and called out every talent and every virtue in Herbert's mind and character, under the judicious culture of his excellent friend and tutor; so that he became, even at his early age, everything that sanguine friend could have wished. His intellect was precocious, as were his feelings; and this enabled him, though younger than his sister, to preserve an influence over her, which evinced itself in endeavours to impart to her some of that information which he had himself acquired. While she, quick, lively, and happy, with that dislike of application, the constant attendant upon a certain kind of talent, which refuses to acknowledge its necessity, would, except from very fondness for her brother, and unwillingness to disoblige him, have gladly dispensed with any information beyond that supplied by her own vivid imagination, quick perception, and sympathetic feelings. It was beautiful to see the boy, whose manly form had already far outstripped his sister's in height and strength, remembering his own fewer sum-

mers, yet, in the consciousness of his superior mental advantages, gently endeavouring to coax the playful girl into attention to her task, which she too frequently evaded by a bound from the glass door of the summer sitting-room, down the flowery slope on which it opened, with a promise from its base, that if he found her amongst the various paths to which it led, she would pay the penalty of more attention. Sometimes on these occasions the boy, smiling and shaking his head at her in despair, would turn away to his own amusements or avocations; but more frequently, the spirits of his own age, as well as hers, would overcome him, and he would bound after her, and chase her until the task was forgotten by them both.

It might have been after one of these chases, and about two years after the death of Lady Alicia, that, in such a lovely evening, as we have attempted to portray in the opening of the story, the brother and sister sauntered along one of the romantic dark walks of Beauton Park.



They were such a pair as seemed purposely formed to rove in such a scene, and such an hour. They were at this time both strikingly beautiful; and were moving together in the very attitude in which the picture represented them; his arm twined fondly round her neck, while hers circled his waist. He was now a tall, slender, and graceful youth, and her bright and beautiful cheek rested as gently on his shoulder, as the movement of a very slow stroll permitted.

“Our lessons are at an end for ever now, Gertrude,” said young Evelyn, as his sister and he paced along.

“Why, dearest Herbert?” she quickly asked; but a hasty blush that succeeded to the question, showed that she had made a better guess at his meaning than she cared to own.

“Oh! because—why, for various reasons: in the first place, because you are grown as inattentive as if—really, as if you were *in love*; and,

in the next place, because Major Vandeleur is in love with you !”

“ In love with me ! how ridiculous, Herbert !” But the sweet uncontrollable twitter about her lovely little plump mouth, the delighted though shy glance of her bright, bird-like eye, and the now deepened blush on her round and almost infantine cheek, all plainly told that the news was neither strange nor disagreeable to her.

“ Ay, *in love* with you, Gertrude, all wonderful as his taste must be ;” (and they exchanged sweet and affectionate smiles ; ) “ and what is more to us, you are in love with him, my sister, and I am quite sure you will be married to him.”

“ Nay, that at all events can never be,” said she ingenuously ; “ for I have heard Major Vandeleur say several times to papa that he was but a soldier of fortune—which, you know, means a soldier without any fortune ; and though mine will be large, I have often heard poor mamma say, it was only enough to entitle

me to a larger: not to supply the place of both."

"You are wonderfully provident, Gertrude!" exclaimed her brother, looking at her with some surprise. "I begin to think you are *not* in love with Vandeleur after all."

Another bright shy glance from eyes instantly averted, and cast on the ground, with a speaking though unconscious smile, told even to the youthful brother, far better than words could have done, not only that his first conjecture was the right one, but that she would gladly share, not her large fortune alone, but her last crust of bread, with the man they spoke of; and that in calculating as she did, it was only in anxious anticipation of the objections that might be urged by others against her marrying him. He knew well the human heart who said,

"Who fondly loves must greatly fear."

Her brother gazed for a moment on her downcast face with a tenderness of feeling that

might have become a father; then twining his arm more closely round her neck, he said :

“ That shall be no impediment, Gertrude. I love Vandeleur myself, and papa and every one seems to like him ; and if want of money be the only objection to your marrying him, you know I must hereafter inherit every shilling of my father’s large fortune, except what you receive as the settlement for younger children, and I can easily prevail on him to make over a part of it to you and Vandeleur immediately.”

Gertrude was herself too generous, too unspoiled by the cold and artificial world—why must we say—*too young* ? to see anything novel or objectionable in this proposal, and only answered it by raising her bright smiling face to his.

“ Then it is to be, Gertrude ?” he asked in a tone of fond, and almost pensive interrogation : “ what shall I do for my playmate and dear pupil ?”

“ Herbert, I will not leave you ! I will never leave you for any one ! ” she exclaimed, suddenly throwing herself into his arms, while her eyes filled with tears.

“ Nay, my own Gertrude, this is childish ; I did but jest. You know I am going almost immediately to college ; and wherever you and Vandeleur may settle, I can always come to you. But, Gertrude, it is time to ask, has Vandeleur spoken to you on the subject yet ? ”

“ Why, not absolutely ; but still I think I can see that it is in his head.”

“ And I can see that you are in his heart ; so when these two are agreed, it is pretty plain what will follow—you know the hand lies between them.”

“ I have so longed to talk to you about it, Herbert, but feared you would laugh at me.”

“ And did you think, Gertrude, that Lady Augusta Starling would feel more seriously on the subject ? ”

“Lady Augusta Starling!—no. I have been obliged to take hers and her father’s raillery in good part; but I have never spoken to her seriously upon the subject.”

“Have you not indeed? Then, my sweet sister, the sooner you make a merit of a necessity the better; for when she commences her raillery, you always look so conscious, and so beseechingly for mercy, that I assure you I supposed you had made an acknowledged confidant of her, and felt not a little jealous.”

“Dearest Herbert, could you believe that you should not be my first and only confidant? Besides, I have really known Lady Augusta so short a time.”

“Yes, but she is a fine and intelligent girl. Our mothers once visited; but since the death of both, and Lady Augusta being sent to London to be educated, there has been no way of keeping up the intimacy, except when my father happens to bring good old Lord Foxhill home to dinner, when he meets him out hunt-



ing. But now that Lady Augusta is returned, I dare say they will see company, and be a great acquisition to you, as they are such near neighbours. She seems to like you more than you do her."

"Not more indeed, Herbert. I think her very lively and agreeable, and like her very much, so far : it was only when you spoke of her and yourself together, that one liking was lost sight of in the other."

"Well, I am glad to hear it ; for if a certain affair proceeds, I do not know whom else you have to look to, for all the pretty little offices necessary on those occasions ; as I do not think our good Miss Wilson would be exactly suited to be one of Cupid's emissaries or assistants, or even of old Hymen's."

"Nay, now, Herbert, you are quizzing me after all. But, do you know, seriously, I think Miss Wilson has been odd of late."

"How do you mean *odd* ? or how *of late* ? for if there is any change, it must be to become

less odd. *Pour l'amour*, what do you mean? By the bye, I shall use that form of entreaty to you in future, my fair lady, as the most appropriate. So, *pour l'amour*, tell me what you mean about Miss Wilson."

Gertrude was obliged to recover herself from a fit of laughing at her own thoughts, ere she was able to answer, "You will think me jealous if I tell you, that since Major Vandeleur has been in the habit of coming here so often, I observe a change in her manners and deportment altogether. Well, Herbert—you make no exclamation of surprise? no reply?"

"I am waiting to understand you—to get even a glimpse at what your meaning can be."

"Well, then, I do assure you I *have* observed what I say. She is become much more attentive to her appearance, and looks much more alive, than heretofore; and, I think, even speaks, or at least nods, more than usual."

"Well, granting it is so, what do you infer from all this?"

“Nay, what would *you* infer from it?”  
[laughing.]—“I tell you the change has taken place since Major Vandeleur’s frequenting our drawing-room.”

“Shall I tell you what I infer from it, Gertrude?”

“Certainly.”

“That you are realizing all I have ever heard, but never before believed, of love not only blinding the eyes, but turning the brain.”

“Nay, but, my Herbert, it has only opened my eyes, it seems.”

“But if you must fulfil all the prescribed rules of an inamorata, and as, I confess, you had not many to choose amongst here, why did you not select Lady Augusta as a more worthy object of jealousy?”

“In the first place, because, though the change I speak of in Miss Wilson is as strange as true, still I absolutely am *not* jealous!—and in the next place, because if I did want an object on whom to practise such prettinesses,

Lady Augusta could not be the one, as Major Vandeleur and she are old friends; and you know old friends never become new lovers."

"Where were they acquainted?"

"In London, two years ago. They met at Lord Hampton's, where his mother lives, and where Lady Augusta is always received very kindly, as her father and the late marchioness were related. She says Major Vandeleur was exceedingly admired in London in the first circles, but that he vanished off the scene from that time.—But, Herbert," she continued, bashfully and almost pleadingly, "tell me, do you really think that if—mind, I say *if*—Major Vandeleur should wish it, papa will give his consent?"

"Not unless Vandeleur asks it, most assuredly, however much he may wish it."

"Unkind Herbert! why are you so teasing?"

"To make you speak candidly and simply out at once, Gertrude." Then, throwing his arms fondly round her, and kissing her forehead,

he hastily added : “ I do—I do think he will—must give his consent, my own dear Gertrude, if it will make you happy.”

“ Nay, you know I am *so* happy already ; though I confess that now—I think—I believe, —Herbert, you are laughing at me !”

“ I am not, love ; I am only laughing at your hesitation to acknowledge what we all know so well.”

“ What !—what do you all know ?” she exclaimed, startled and blushing :—“ not that I wish to leave home ?”

“ No, no,” said her brother, smiling ; “ only whatever you were about to acknowledge yourself, when my unlucky smile arrested it on your lips.”

“ I was only going to confess, that I should now certainly miss Vandeleur’s society very much.”

“ Well, you shall *not* miss it, my dearest sister. He is a fine, noble-looking fellow, and seems very pleasing and amiable : the only possible

objection I can think of is, that, if we understood him rightly, his mother is governess, or companion, or something of that sort, in some nobleman's family;—I hope she's not like Miss Wilson !”

“ You may be satisfied, then, that she is not ; for Lady Augusta told me all about it, and it is quite a particular case : it is in the Marquis of Hampton's family. He had but one daughter, to whom Mrs. Vandeleur went rather as a second mother, when the marchioness died, than as a governess : she continued with her always, and moved in the first circles with her. The young lady is now married, and Mrs. Vandeleur continues to reside with her, and is held in the highest respect and estimation.”

“ Oh ! this does indeed seem a distinct business from a mere common governess. But I wonder, then, why Vandeleur thought it necessary to bring it out as he did,—for it certainly seemed to me to be done for the express purpose of giving us information which he seemed



to apprehend might not be pleasing; and it was at the same time that he spoke of himself being a soldier of fortune. He took the opportunity, too, when only papa, you and I, and Mr. Ma-son were present, as if to spare Miss Wilson—and he certainly coloured when he mentioned it: all this looked as if he himself felt it a degradation.”

“ He looked as if he was what he is, the noblest and most upright of men! How well I know why he mentioned it all in that way!—not only that we might know the worst that any one could think of it, but that we might find it so much better in reality than he represented it.”

“ Well, that was a little Quixotic, too: how will he look if he has given my father a prejudice he cannot remove?”

“ You don’t think he has, Herbert? I do assure you, I have not exaggerated in the least Lady Augusta’s account of it; she even said that they were known to be people of good con-

nexions ; and you know Lady Augusta, though not, I think, exquisitely high bred herself, has been lately in very high society in London.”

“ She has, I believe, and is a very good and shrewd judge in these matters ; and, happily for you, I don’t think my father cares a fig for them ; and I know he will have confidence enough in me to make a considerable addition to your fortune.”

An affectionate kiss from Gertrude expressed at once her happiness and thanks ; and they were proceeding homewards, now perfectly silent, lost in their own sweet thoughts, and innocent plans for a continuance of happiness, which had never yet experienced a cloud ; and probably offering up the incense of their young hearts’ gratitude for their being so favoured amongst men, when Gertrude, perhaps from that very reflection, suddenly exclaimed —

“ Oh ! Herbert ! did you remember to ride over to read to the poor old dying woman who

begged to see you as the clergyman was absent?"

"No; indeed I am ashamed to say I did not, and I do not deserve the happiness I enjoy; but I shall yet have time this lovely evening, while you and Vandeleur row about the lake, and I think my father must have released him from the dining-room before now; so, good-b'ye."

"Good-b'ye, dearest, dearest brother! but if you knew how dreadfully the thought of leaving you takes from my happiness in the prospect before me!"

"Silly girl! you will not leave me. Great haste as you are in, very possibly it is I who shall leave you, to enter college. You are not married yet, remember, for all our wise saws." And away he flew.

How had Major Vandeleur been employed while his fate was thus settled by his two youthful and innocent admirers?

For some time he was detained by Mr. Evelyn

in the dining-room ; but as he was not anxious to render himself particularly agreeable this lovely evening within doors, in a room heated with the fumes of dinner and of wine, when he guessed that the lady of his love was enjoying far different perfumes without, he was soon released. Failing however in tracing her steps amidst the intricacies of Beauton, he retired to the summer sitting-room, which by custom had become almost exclusively sacred to Gertrude and Herbert, and there sat down to console himself for their absence by writing a letter to his mother, which we shall take the liberty of presenting to our readers.

*Letter from Major Vandeleur to his Mother.*

“ MY DEAR MOTHER ;

“ Many thanks for your kind letter and present, or letter and kind present, I care not which way you place the adjective, for I assure you one was as acceptable to me as the other. I plead guilty to your charge of having been a

remiss correspondent of late ; but I am about to make amends for it now, by so long a letter as, if I had not the privilege of enclosing to your noble friend, would try, I think, even your patience, all interesting as I know the subject will prove to you. I told you in my last how much I liked my present quarters, and chiefly in consequence of two very agreeable families, that of old Lord Foxhill and of Mr. Evelyn ; and when I told you that Lord Foxhill's daughter, Lady Augusta Starling, lively and beautiful, and witty and musical, and well-dowered, was at her father's old mansion here, you threw out some gentle insinuations. But, my mother, did I not tell you at the same time, that Gertrude Evelyn, though neither witty, musical, or an heiress, was the sweetest and most fascinating creature, without my being exactly able to say why, that I ever beheld—almost—(but let that pass). You say I did not mention this ! Well, hear it from me now, my mother. She is not yet quite sixteen,

but she really is the most delightful mixture of childishness, and woman's best feelings, that ever laid siege to a poor soldier's heart. In one thing she can compare with Lady Augusta even in verbal description—she is quite beautiful. You remember when our friend Lord D—— was first presented to the beautiful daughter of General G——, his exclamation in his own odd way of, ‘Blue eyes and black hair, how interesting!’ Add to this a very fair, and particularly soft and beautiful skin, and you will have the same odd jumble of beauties united in her person, as is in her character; and the result is the same too—‘love and loveliness.’ She is *petite*, but exquisite. With a voice like a cherub, or, if that is a far-fetched simile, like Joy whispering its own sweet secrets! she is too airy to suffer it or her fingers to be broke into order. Luckily her laugh is music in itself, and does not require as much entreaty to bring it forth, as the more artificial music of other ladies. She is fond of painting,



and has done some pretty things. She rides—I was going to say like an angel, but that might imply by the aid of wings; and you, being a very learned lady, might fancy I meant on Pegasus; of which, to say truth, she is as guiltless as any unlettered soldier could wish his wife to be. No; to speak seriously, her education, as it is technically called, has been rather neglected; though the refinement of her late mother's mind and manners, which is universally admitted, has given a polish to her children, which is even striking already; whilst her secluded, and valetudinarian habits, left Gertrude without a companion except her brother; to which, I suppose, may be attributed her blooming health and artless simplicity. But then, to make amends for the want of a systematic education, she has sweetness, amiability, vivacity, and a degree of cleverness, that not only shows she would be an apt scholar, but which could not fail to interest a man of taste and feeling; in neither of which, I trust, is your poor son wholly deficient. Then

her brother, who, though a year younger, is already a perfect gentleman, and an enlightened companion, has taught her all that she would consent to learn from him ; but he complains sadly of her idleness. They are devotedly attached to each other, and really are a charming and beautiful pair. Mr. Evelyn himself is a good-humoured, hospitable sportsman ; but so utterly unfit to be father to Gertrude—at least to be her sole protector, that I think he would not be very fastidious in the choice of a husband for her, simply to free himself from the responsibility of taking care of what he has some vague idea is a treasure ; just as a clown might have of one of Raphael's Madonnas—he neither knows or loves her as he ought. Add to these personages a most classical specimen of a tutor : really one of the most genuinely good, and learned men, it has ever been my lot to meet with ; and who, odd as it may seem, has taken a great fancy to me—indeed, I am the only one, except Herbert Evelyn, whom he ever volunteers to

address. Nay, now it is odd, mother, notwithstanding your partiality, and my own self-love. For, whatever modest laurels I may have gained as a schoolboy, they have been long crushed down under my heavy helmet, till I fear not a leaf of them remains. One more addition, and you have the household of Mr. Evelyn complete, and even some of the furniture ; for certainly little better than a sweeping-brush dressed up in petticoats, is a thing who is here by way of keeping Miss Evelyn in countenance in this bachelor's house. I have never yet heard the sound of her voice by any accident ; but when I insisted to Miss E. that she must be dumb, she assured me that she was not ; that when first she came, she used to answer at dinner,—but that now she has so broken them into her ‘ nods, and becks, and wreathed smiles,’ (ye gods ! what a smile it is !) that she is enabled to dispense with words altogether ! Miss Evelyn is pleased to say that I see her to particular advantage ; that she

dresses much better, and her signs are much more frequent, since my arrival—dear soul ! But you will wonder to what all this long history is tending — will you, my mother ? Well, it is tending, or intended at least, to make you intimately acquainted with a family, with whom it would be the pride, and happiness, of my existence, to become connected, through the lovely daughter. Young men in general make choice of each other to become the depositaries of such secrets as this ; but, besides that some passages of my past life, too sacred even for friendship's ear, have necessarily fallen under your eye, and thereby formed a more than common bond between us—besides this, I have never much relished committing these little matters to masculine sympathies. Hear me then, my mother : I love Gertrude Evelyn as I never thought I should have loved woman again—Again, did I say ? nay, it is as unlike what has passed by as a dream in a former state of existence—as if the two feelings did not come under the same denomi-

nation. And it is much better that it should be so : had it been at all of the same kind, it never could have equalled it, in respect, devotion—I had nearly said worship. But now it is a species in itself, new and delicious : I love her as an angelic child ; I adore her as a lovely woman ; who, by re-wakening feelings that I thought had slept for ever, has already restored me to happiness. It is true, she is some ten or twelve years younger than I am ; but what of that ? she is so young that it does not make me an old man ; and in good faith, if I can win her, I think I shall make her as good a guardian as her father does. Nor do I think the little angel is wholly unconscious of my passion : she blushes at my approach, and I have sometimes thought I detected a bright glance exchanged between her and her brother, when any little confusion or blundering at table, or elsewhere, has obliged me to make any marked effort to get near her ; nor has the glance been an unjoyous one, and seldom unaccompanied by an irrepressible



smile on that loveliest and most ingenuous of mouths; while the gentlemanly and more cautious youth, generally, in endeavouring to avert, is sure to confirm my suspicions, by a deep blush, and an effort to look grave. Cannot you fancy them very charming and interesting? If I should be so blest as to win Gertrude, I really think half—no, perhaps not so much—but a great deal of my happiness will consist in becoming elder brother to him. I have formed a sincere, and serious friendship for, and with him, far beyond what, without knowing him, you could suppose possible with one of his age. But, after all, what pretensions have I to such a girl as Miss Evelyn? This sometimes presses heavily on my consideration. The small, very small inheritance which your generosity and maternal affection induced you to leave for me, unburthened even by your own support, when I was too young to understand the sacrifice you made, until you had become too much attached to, and too much beloved by your angelic pupil,



to think of parting from her ; this trifling inheritance, and my pay as major of dragoons, not only does not entitle me to aspire to a young lady of Miss Evelyn's handsome—nay, very large fortune, not to mention any other considerations,—but scarcely, I fear, sets me above the suspicion of very great presumption. From the charge of mercenary views, indeed, the best safeguard is in her charming self. Mr. Evelyn's large property is strictly entailed upon his son, and failing him, upon his daughter ; and, although *I* can safely assert that I should rather have himself as a brother, both for Gertrude's dear sake and my own, than have his fortune by his death, still this entail renders her right (in Smithfield language) to a noble match, all the stronger : however, we shall see. Her father seems to me not to value her half enough—and perhaps poor somebody's chance is all the better for that.—But I must break off, for I see her just coming up towards the house, from a walk on which she mischievously set out with

her brother, before I could make my escape from the dining-room ; and as he is not returned with her, I must go in civility and escort her. No, my mother, no disguise with you—*I cannot stay away from her*. However, as I sleep here to-night, I shall finish my letter in the morning ; and perhaps,—*perhaps*, for she does look so beautiful this moment, carolling along the walk without shawl or bonnet.—

“ My mother ! it is true ! it is as my soul whispered me ! My sweet, my lovely, my angelic girl loves me, with a depth and fervour, which I now perceive I did not dare to anticipate from her years. Her father has accepted me, and I am the very happiest fellow that treads this beautiful and happy earth. I would go through particulars for you if I could ; but I cannot. She looked so lovely and so conscious, when I joined her the evening before last, when I threw by my letter, that I know not how it was, in questioning that consciousness, that I was emboldened to plead my own cause.

Yesterday everything was settled between Mr. Evelyn and me: he certainly is off-handed and liberal enough. Dear Herbert is nearly as happy as I am, though pensive on it, instead of gay. His wedding present, by his father's consent, is a lieutenant-colonelcy for me; and they are to give Gertrude a few thousands extra for her wedding-clothes, carriages, &c. &c. so we shall do extremely well: at all events, we are, and *will* be extremely happy. Congratulate me, my mother, and, in good old phrase, give me your blessing. I even made my confession, and told my dear, dear Gertrude, that though now my only, she was not my first love: she fixed her dear eyes on me with a kind of childish disappointment for a moment, but was soon perfectly reassured, and accepted my candour instead.—Now, am I not dutiful to write so much to you at such a time? Ah! but who wept with me in other times?—she who will now, I trust, rejoice with me.—Gertrude has not yet made her appearance this morning; which is an

unusual thing, as it is past her hour, and a morning bright as our prospects. I think I hear her light step now.—Adieu, my dear mother ; God ever bless you !

“ Your affectionate son,

“ GODFREY VANDELEUR.

“ P.S.—It is not she, after all. I wonder what makes her so unusually late. You remember my servant Whitecross ; his wife is maid to Lady Augusta Starling, and when she came here with Lady Augusta, she set up such a romance about me through the house, that it really became quite disagreeable ; as, for her worthy husband’s sake, I did not care to enter into the particulars of that bygone story. She certainly is a grateful creature, but rather obstreperous in her gratitude.—Adieu ! I hear Gertrude now. I shall see you soon, for I must run up to town previous to——. *Addio, cara !*”

From the moment of this auspicious proposal nothing could exceed the happiness at Beauton

Park. Mr. Evelyn, at all times jovial and good-humoured, felt now not only as if a weight, a care, a responsibility, had been removed from his shoulders, but as if he himself must in some way have deserved credit for his only daughter's being so soon, and so eligibly settled in life; and in this complex feeling of relief, and self-gratulation, he grew fonder of Gertrude than he had ever been before. Herbert's love could know no increase; but a kind of tender respect towards the young bride, the chosen of Major Vandeleur, began now to mingle with it, and the effect was delightful. Mr. Mason became sincerely interested in hers and Major Vandeleur's happiness; and such was the diffusive nature of this general good-will, that even impassive Miss Wilson did not wholly escape the infection. In her, however, it was manifested in a manner peculiar to herself, and such as served to show, that if Gertrude was mistaken in the cause she affected to assign for the change in her Duenna's deportment, it was neverthe-



less more dependant on the time and circumstance of Major Vandeleur's arrival, than she herself had ventured to imagine.

The establishment at Beauton, though on a very liberal scale, was not, as may be imagined, conducted with the elegance or propriety of a nobleman's house in London, or even of that of a man of half Mr. Evelyn's fortune, in the present improved state of society. For instance, if a servant was unexpectedly dismissed for some misdemeanour, Mr. Evelyn would never think of replacing him until, perhaps, some day when more persons than usual were expected to dinner, Gertrude or Herbert might observe to him, that there were not servants enough to attend at table; and then his answer would be —“ Oh, d—— it ! then let John the undergroom, or Tom the helper, slip on that fellow's livery and come in : I suppose they can carry a plate from one to another ? I must certainly inquire for a servant to-morrow.” The consequence was, that many little *gaucheries* and



vexatious *contretemps* occurred from time to time, from which he would have been glad to purchase exemption at double the man's wages, when it was no longer possible.

It was upon one of these occasions that Miss Wilson did more towards proving the truth of the metaphysical doctrine, of all being alike in all, already alluded to, in describing her character, or—want of it, than all that has ever been conjectured upon the subject. It was one of her distinguishing traits—indeed almost necessarily so, to be remarkably indifferent about her dress. Not that she was offensively slovenly, but only seemed to escape from that by some odd chance, or habit, impressed upon her in some lucky moment. And here again her inertia stood her friend; for the one decent dark dress, which had first been prescribed for her, she invariably replaced, when it seemed to threaten a change, by another critically the same. Of late, however, as Miss Evelyn had remarked, the dark gown was sometimes superseded by a pale and

faded lilac silk, which might have had its birth in the days of good Queen Bess ; and on the occasion above alluded to, when a few more gentlemen than usual were to dine at Beaumont, not only did she make her appearance in this gothic piece of finery, but an additional bow of ribbon upon her cap, left no doubt upon the minds of any, but that Miss Wilson intended to act the *belle*. Major Vandeleur, albeit he had other occupation for his eyes just then, could not, as she placed herself opposite to him at dinner, fail to observe her grotesque appearance, and whispered to Gertrude, as he took his place beside her—

“ You must now tax your mischievous ingenuity to find out some other reason for all this finery, than a design on *me* ; for, unless she means to carry me off *vi et armis*, she must have given up all hopes since Thursday. But changed she certainly is ; even I myself can now perceive it. Do look, Gertrude, how she ogles about ! What can be the meaning of it ? Is the old bachelor you told me of at dinner to-day ? ”

“ No, nonsense ! he has been at Bath for his health since before you came to the country ; and positively it is since you came, that she has grown so very ridiculous ! ”

Vandeleur laughed, as he always did when Gertrude, with evident seriousness, dated Miss Wilson’s altered eye from this period. “ Can it be rejoicing over your happy prospects ? ” he asked in the same tone of playful raillery.

“ I do not know, but the effect is most melancholy : it really makes me uneasy ; I am sometimes afraid she is going mad.”

“ You need not ; and if she were, her madness is more amusing than her idiocy. But take my word for it, that there is something besides madness here : the disease is of the heart, and not of the head.”

“ What can you possibly mean ? Are you becoming a convert to my jealous apprehensions ? ”

“ No ; I mean simply this,—that she thinks, since you are about to marry, it is time for her to ‘ go and do likewise.’ Believe me, Ger-

trude, that *bow* upon her cap is intended to shoot *arrows* ;

“ Though where they aim at, no one dreameth.”

The words had scarcely passed his lips, when the whole party was startled, and the very glasses on the table made to tremble, by a piercing shriek ; and Miss Wilson, with her eyes distended beyond even their usual inane dimensions, and fastened upon Gertrude with a look of reproachful appeal, was heard to exclaim in a shrill loud scream of despair, “ Ooh ! the breadth of my gown !”

Had the gown itself cried out from agony at the scalding soup, which it was now discovered, had been, by “ Tom the helper,” precipitated upon it, it could scarcely have produced a more startling effect upon every one present. Upon Gertrude it was such, that she flew round the table to the rescue, as if irresistibly impelled by the startling appeal that had been made to her ; and when arrived there, she found to her amazement that the whole was produced simply

by the passive machine, the walking automaton—"the passionless, fusionless" Miss Wilson, proving herself to be "a woman still"—in perfect agony over an injured dress! Gertrude, absolutely bewildered by the phenomenon, endeavoured to console her in terms more suited to the effect than to the cause, and several napkins were applied to repair the injury: but all efforts were alike in vain to soothe Miss Wilson; the ice was broken, the long-pent stream burst forth, and on she flowed:

"Oh, Miss Evelyn, my gown! my gown! the only handsome, dressy-looking one, I ever had! and as the front breadth was a little soiled, I had just got it altered, and put it to the side!—oh! and put it to the left side on purpose that if anything was spilt it should fall on it! but that odious 'Tom the helper,' (darting a look of fury at him,) who never does anything as he ought, comes flouncing round to my right, and empties the plate on my good side!"



Gertrude actually recoiled a few paces with horror at this awful speech; and there were none present at the moment, who had not been in Miss Wilson's company often enough to be fully aware of the extraordinary circumstance of *any* speech from her. Even placid, gentle Mr. Mason was startled from his usual negative avoidance of her, and advanced a step or two from his place, muttering, "Poor woman ! poor creature ! what ails her ? she must be ill ; something has touched her head ;"—while Mr. Evelyn kept exclaiming eagerly from the other end of the table, "What is the matter ? what is all that ? will nobody answer me ? was it Miss Wilson who cried out and spoke ?"

His doubts were about to be solved on the instant, by the lady herself, who turned and glared on him with that intent, holding up the fatal "breadth" between her hands, when Gertrude, though really palpitating with alarm, apprehending another disgraceful exposure,



hastily exclaimed, in a tone to which her anxiety lent decision, "Miss Wilson, for Heaven's sake speak no more! Pray sit down, and compose yourself, I beg!" Anything like authority was too habitual in its influence over Miss Wilson, to be rejected even in that moment of unnatural excitement; and after turning round from Mr. Evelyn to Gertrude with "the breadth" still stretched between her hands, and an idiotic look and sob of despair, she mechanically resumed her place, and order was to all appearance restored. But the adventures of the night terminated not so peaceably: the flames of a hidden fire may be partially subdued, but if the source be not extinguished they will surely burst out anew.

When the party assembled next morning at breakfast, Gertrude and Major Vandeleur, as they each successively made their appearance, inquired for Mr. Mason, who was so regular in his habits, that, not to find him reading in the window of the breakfast-parlour, was little less

strange, than if that window itself had disappeared. The first inquiries passed without answer or apparent notice ; but as breakfast proceeded, and Gertrude inquired more seriously of Miss Wilson if she knew what had become of Mr. Mason, Mr. Evelyn, unable longer to contain himself, burst out into a long, loud, and uncontrollable fit of laughter. Herbert raised his cup to his face, as if to conceal a smile ; and Miss Wilson put a larger piece of bread than usual into her mouth, but showed no other symptom of concern. Vandeleur and Gertrude stared from one of the party to the other ; but as no one seemed disposed to answer their looks of intelligence, they were obliged to turn them upon each other. Presently Mr. Evelyn, either unable to recover himself, or wishing for a companion in his mirth, rose from the table, and touching Major Vandeleur's shoulder slightly as he passed him, they left the room together. The moment they got outside the door, Mr. Evelyn proceeded

without further preface, to inform Vandeleur that Mr. Mason had actually fled the house for no other purpose, than to shun the persecution of Miss Wilson's love ! Vandeleur of course thought the joke too good to be true ; but he was soon satisfied of his sceptical error, and his enjoyment of it then, was scarcely inferior to that of Mr. Evelyn himself.

The circumstances were as follows :—It was Mr. Mason's custom, especially when any strangers dined at Beauton, to leave the dining-room almost immediately after the ladies, to enjoy either a solitary walk, or the society of more instructive companions in the library. To this apartment, which immediately adjoined his own, and which was nearly as sacred from the intrusion of the females of the family, or indeed of Mr. Evelyn himself, though not from exactly the same reasons, he had betaken himself for a quiet hour, on the evening of the gown adventure. Not being able to lay his hand on a book which he had been reading before dinner,

he passed on into his own room, to see whether he might not have left it there. He had not been many minutes engaged in this search, when his attention was arrested by hearing a light, at least a female's, step in the library. He was surprised, but resolved to wait until the unwelcome visiter, who had probably merely come in search of some old romance, should have retired. The step, however, was suddenly checked, as if from uncertainty or disappointment, ere it had advanced many paces into the room. There was a moment's pause ; the step was resumed, and seemed approaching towards his bed-room : he turned quickly round to see whom it could be, and, let the reader imagine his astonishment, when he beheld Miss Wilson advanced several paces into his room, and standing before him with a simper on her odd face that seemed to say—" Yes, here I am !"

Mr. Mason certainly was no Hector ; his literary habits, if not his natural character, precluded this ; but neither was he deficient in that

moral courage, the constant attendant on the wise and good. Yet must it be confessed, that as this apparition met his view, and all the accompanying circumstances darted into his mind,—his remote chamber—the solitary hour—Miss Wilson's exhibition at dinner—the miraculous breadth of the gown, which had caused even the dumb to speak, now impassively interposed between him and the library, the only place where he felt himself invincible and hitherto safe, — the simper broaden upon the inane countenance—her venturing, or even finding her way, up his staircase at all,—and, though last not least, the sudden change from her usually quiet and unobtrusive deportment;—as all these circumstances crowded at once upon his mind, it must be confessed that his courage so utterly forsook him, that he first glanced at the door, which was behind her, and which therefore he could not gain without passing nearer to her—then at the windows, which were behind himself, but which being some thirty feet from the



ground, he could not escape by without the risk of breaking his neck, and finally edged towards the fire-place, in order to be within reach of—the poker !

Alas ! it is too true ! Miss Wilson, whether it was that she perceived his design and wished to arrest it, or whether it was that she thought she had acted dumb show long enough, suddenly jerked herself (it could not be called springing,) towards him, and, seizing one of his hands between both hers, looked up into his face with an expression which, if not insinuating, was certainly meant to be so, as she stood precisely in the attitude in which Liston says, “I hope I don’t intrude !” and continued to simper and peer in a fearful manner with both lips and eyes. Good, gentle, gentlemanly Mr. Mason !—it is painful to expose any little weakness on his part—but the best and greatest of us are mortal still, and subject, at some unlucky moment, to human frailties and affections !—The truth must be told—the good old man shouted aloud !



It was of no use—Miss Wilson was undaunted ! We have already said that the ice that incrusted her meagre intellect, and bound her tongue, was broken, by whatever spell ; and her imbecility once set a-going, it was as impossible to stop it, as it had hitherto proved to excite her. Mr. Mason struggled to release his hand, and she struggled to retain it ; and as he was absolutely trembling with terror, and nervously anxious to avoid further contact with her, by using his other hand, she was successful, in spite of all his efforts, in retaining her grasp of his thin fingers, while now stretched on tip-toe, she kept shrilly crying out—“ Mr. Mason ! Mr. Mason ! you mistake me, sir ; I ’m not going to hurt you ! Why, dear me, sir, hear reason ; I don’t want to hurt you ! ”

It is impossible to say how this most unusual struggle might have terminated, but that, just as it had arrived at this point, one of the women servants, who usually arranged the sleeping apartments at that hour, suddenly opened a

door of the room, which Mr. Mason had forgotten in his sudden terror, being one he never used, and which only opening on the servants' staircase, the housemaid generally kept locked. No sooner did she put her head into the room, and perceive how it was occupied, than, uttering a faint scream, she hastily withdrew. This seemed to have some slight effect even upon Miss Wilson, and she involuntarily slackened her hold; which Mr. Mason instantly taking advantage of, with a vigorous effort shook his hand free, and made towards the door by which the woman had retired. Miss Wilson pursued him. It was needless. The woman, true to her constant custom, in her amazement departed not from it, and had locked the door behind her! Mr. Mason groaned, and Miss Wilson chuckled! He turned his eyes heavily and despairingly towards the other door; and the fearful barrier being now removed, he made a desperate rush towards it. Alas! he was a frail and feeble old man! Miss Wilson per-

ceived his design, and plunged after him ; and being much the more active of the two, she reached the goal first ; and as she whisked round in triumph, having locked the door, and popped the key into the unfathomable depths of her pocket, Mr. Mason and she dashed plump against each other ! Miss Wilson absolutely laughed. If the laugh of Dominie Sampson produced a very serious effect upon a delicate woman, most certainly that of Miss Wilson did not leave Mr. Mason unmoved ; or rather, it rendered him immovable. He sank down upon a chair in utter exhaustion both of mind and body, really beginning to think that all the powers of earth, if not of another region, were leagued against him, and faintly repeated to himself — “ Oh, my God, what is all this ! ” Miss Wilson took advantage of his apparent resignation, and approached him : he hastily pressed his hands over his eyes, as if to avail himself of the only means that were left him to escape at least from beholding the frightful

vision. She, however, remained perfectly unmoved, and addressed him in these words :

“ Now, Mr. Mason, what is the matter with you ? why do you treat me so rudely ? ”

The hand was for a moment withdrawn to wither her with a look of indignant astonishment ; but as it utterly failed of its effect, after another hopeless glance at both the doors, the hand was firmly replaced, and she continued with the utmost solemnity —

“ Mr. Mason, are you saying your prayers ? I thought you were going to answer me : why do you treat me so rudely, (no movement from the poor despairing old man now,) by receiving me in such a manner, when I am come into your room to speak to you on a most serious business ? ”

A low stifled groan told more plainly than any words could have done, that, let the business be what it might, to him it was serious enough.

She proceeded. “ Yes, Mr. Mason, and a

business that concerns you as well as me. You see, Miss Evelyn is going to be married, and Mr. Herbert going to college" ——

She paused, and once more the hand was withdrawn, in utter amazement at so rational an observation from her; and though habit so far prevailed as to prevent his thinking it necessary to use *words* to her, his countenance pretty plainly expressed, "Well?"

"Well," she said; "and what is then to become of you and me?"

His countenance grew dark and despairing again.

"Indeed, Mr. Mason, I should never think of coming forward in this manner if you were a young man; but as you have seen that other men, your superiors in rank and fortune, have courted me, and as you are a poor desolate old man, there can be no harm in my saying at once to you, that it seems to me the best thing we can do is to marry and take care of each other!"



We must leave the matter here ; no words, no language, could give any idea of Mr. Mason's situation at the moment his ears received these words, uttered, as they evidently were, in perfect seriousness and earnestness. He stared, he gaped, he literally gasped at her ; and the first words he uttered since she entered the room were, after a considerable pause, and with the utmost solemnity, as if a new light had broken on him —

“ Woman ! are you drunk ? ”

“ Drunk ! indeed I am not, Mr. Mason. But now just tell me what better we could do ? ”

Another stare of more unmixed horror and detestation was followed by the answer —

“ To die ! and be d—d ! ”

If we have succeeded in giving our readers the remotest idea of Mr. Mason's natural and acquired gentleness and philosophy, this violent answer will go farther than any description, to show the state of horror and despair to which he was driven ; and, let it be remembered, all



this time hopelessly locked up with his tormentor in his own room !

She remained still utterly unmoved.

“ Nay, now, Mr. Mason, why do you answer that way ? You cannot but have some feeling for me, after living so many years together.”

“ *I have !*” he groaned forth, with an emphasis that could not have been mistaken by any one else, but by obtuse Miss Wilson it really was.

“ And now, Mr. Mason, if you have, what hinders you from marrying me, and our spending our lives together ?”

“ Woman ! spend your life with the devil if you will ! what have you or I to do with each other ?”

“ Just this, sir ; that you’ll see, if we marry together, the family will settle something handsome on us to support us.”

It must here be remembered that Mr. Mason was a liberal, learned, and gentlemanly-minded man, though from adverse circumstances and his

own primitive simplicity, he never rose above being dependent on his talents for comfortable support. It may be imagined, then, how far the consideration now suggested tended to sweeten his inamorata's preceding proposal. It actually roused him to fury, and suddenly springing from his seat, he seized her by the arm, and exclaimed, "Woman ! you are either drunk or possessed with an evil spirit. Give me the key this very moment, or I vow to Heaven I will take it by force, and throw you out of the window !"

Miss Wilson was not one of those sensitive persons to whom cowardice belongs, and accordingly she began once more—

"Now, Mr. Mason——" but he stopped her short by turning to the bell, and ringing it furiously, exclaimed, "Now, madam, see how you will look when the servants fly up, thinking I am only on fire !"

She did consider it, and instantly producing the key, handed it to him; though, while he was

unlocking the door, she kept muttering, “ Well, Mr. Mason, you are not wise—you don’t know what’s good for you. God knows, I meant nothing but to secure a provision for us both in the simplest manner ; and you’re ungrateful too, for it is to please you that I have studied my dress of late ! and little I’d have cared about the breadth of my gown but for *you* !”

Mr. Mason, who by this time had got the door open, gave her one more look of contemptuous aversion, and was motioning her out through the library, when she said, “ Well, if I had foreseen all this, I’ll engage I never would have refused Mr. Nelson : but, besides that I never thought of Miss Evelyn’s marrying so soon, I thought that whenever it did happen I was always sure of you !” And so saying, she left the room, apparently without resentment or confusion, by one door just as the servants entered by the other.

Of course the woman who answered the bell appeared with a grin and a simper.

“ Go tell your master I must speak with him instantly.”

The woman stared. “ My master, sir, has not left the dining-room yet.”

“ No matter ; tell him I must speak with him this very moment.”

The message was sent in, and in a few minutes Mr. Evelyn came running up stairs, all astonishment and curiosity, having first ascertained from the servant that no accident had happened. He found Mr. Mason busily engaged packing up his clothes.

“ Good God ! Mr. Mason, what’s the matter ? where are you going ?”

“ Oh, sir, to perdition, I believe ; my brain is turned—I never was in such a state before.”

“ Explain yourself, Mr. Mason, I entreat you ; what has happened, in the name of Heaven ?”

“ Oh, mention any name but that, sir ! The infernal——But no, I won’t debase myself.”

And as calmly as he could he informed Mr. Evelyn of the scene that had just occurred.

It may easily be guessed what intensity of delight it afforded to a man of Mr. Evelyn's idle but jovial disposition and habits. He laughed until he saw Mr. Mason had nearly concluded his packing, utterly regardless of his mirth ; he then endeavoured most anxiously to dissuade him from his purpose of departure ; and, finally, when he could not laugh him out of it, by pointing out the ridicule that would necessarily attach itself to the procedure, he seriously assured him, that if either must quit the field, Miss Wilson should be the one. But of this Mr. Mason would not hear : he said, and said truly, that he had all along intended absenting himself during the wedding festivities ; that this untoward matter only hastened his departure ; and that Herbert was long as fit for college as he could render him. In short, all that Mr. Evelyn could obtain was his pro-

mise not to engage himself elsewhere, without communicating with them again ; and as Miss Wilson's services would probably terminate with Miss Evelyn's marriage, that he would then return to them at least upon a visit.

It was then settled that, in order to avoid exciting curiosity and explanations, no one should be made aware of his intentions that night except Herbert ; and before any of the rest of the family had left their pillows next morning, he was driven by his attached and grateful pupil, to the town of B——, to meet the coach that started from thence for the north of England, where his family resided. His books and more heavy luggage he left behind him as a pledge of his return.

Such were the consequences that ensued from the unlooked-for, unhopèd-for, unexpected proposal of marriage from one sickly old bachelor, operating upon a weak and nearly idiotic mind, which admitted of but one idea—that of provision—not emolument—merely provision ; and



even that, only by negative means, such as should be suggested by others, and not counteracted by herself. The moment she attempted to act or think for herself, all was absurd chaos: and her having resisted the probably not very pressing, or energetic proposal of Mr. Nelson, can only be accounted for, by supposing, in addition to what she said herself, that she really was so taken by surprise, (it being the first time in her life such an address had ever been made to her,) that she knew not what she did.

Some will be pleased to say that such surprises generally affect ladies the other way: but those are ladies whose thoughts have been long and deeply engaged upon the subject in the affirmative light, which Miss Wilson's in reality never had been. Besides, to counterbalance whatever of that propensity is absolutely inseparable from a lady's nature, the first mention of it only presented to her mind the prospect of quitting the substantial comforts of

Beauton; and as she never had been in the habit of looking before her, this prospect, which would have been the one ever present to a more rational mind, in order to provide against its consequences, came to her with all the force of a most disagreeable novelty, and she hastily rejected what seemed to her calculated to produce it. When the marriage of Miss Evelyn forced the consideration on her mind again, and she saw no one appearing desirous to renew Mr. Nelson's offer, she, for the first time, ventured to think and act for herself—with what effect the reader is aware, and we must only hope that it might deter her from such unnatural efforts of mind in future. It seemed for the present, indeed, to have done so; for she at once subsided again into her own quiet and taciturn habits; and even her dress, to the mortification of Major Vandeleur's vanity, sank to its former level, or perhaps a little below it. It was remarkable that she never even once inquired what had become of Mr. Mason. In

former times, indeed, this would not have been noticed in her; but, after such an explosion, minor sparks were naturally expected still, now and then, to scintillate.

It was not so, however; she was true to her second self; and as Gertrude, though she now experienced an odd and unpleasantly uncertain feeling towards her, would not suffer her to be quizzed or tormented on the subject, the family resumed their usual habits, as far as she was concerned, as much as if no such disturbance had ever occurred. The ocean subsides as perfectly after a rock has been cast from an Almighty hand, as when a pebble has been flung by an infant: the greatest misfortunes or the greatest joys are forgotten in their effects, as well as the trifle of the moment; the only difference is in the time they each require.

In the mean while, days flew by at Beauton on the wings of love—the most rapid, but the least enduring of Time's many wings! The first eloud that was seen to hover over those assem-

bled there, since the auspicious hour of Major Vandeleur's arrival amongst them, appeared on the occasion of his going to London, to make some necessary arrangements, and to bring his mother to be present at his wedding. Still, it was but a summer-cloud; and so bright, and so pure, was the expanse of happiness across which it passed, that it excited a smile rather than a tear, in the grateful hearts which it overshadowed. He departed; and we shall avail ourselves of his absence to take a peep at his past life, and endeavour to throw light upon one or two allusions which he made to other days, in his letter to his mother.

## CHAPTER IV.

Can I not serve you ? you are young, and of  
That mould which throws out heroes ; fair in favour,

\* \* \* \* \*

And doubtlessly, with such a form and heart,  
Would look into the fiery eyes of war  
As ardently for glory as you dared  
An obscure death to save an unknown stranger.

*Werner.*

GODFREY VANDELEUR's father had been the younger son of a respectable, but by no means wealthy family. Nor had they to boast of, or bewail, any gradual or sudden "decline and fall." They had for generations been respectable both in class and character, and there was no record of their ever having been much higher or much lower in human estimation—probably,

therefore, they never had been. His mother had more to boast of: she was the daughter of a clergyman much more highly connected; but as she was one of nine daughters,

“ Her portion was but scant ;”

and as the glebe-house occupied by her father was very near to one of the residences of his noble friend and patron, the Marquis of Hampton, into whose society it was the darling hope of his heart to see his children as they grew up admitted, he made that portion still smaller, by educating each of them “to the top of their bent.” Mrs. Vandeleur was at once the most amiable, and the most highly-gifted amongst them; and yet, as it was impossible for a conscientious clergyman to confine his family to the occasional society of Lord Hampton’s mansion, she formed an attachment with Mr. Vandeleur, which was extremely regretted by her father. She would not offend him; and therefore it was not until after his death, which, by depriving his children of the chief source of



their provision, and all their claim to “looking high,” rendered Mr. Vandeleur a perfectly suitable match for her, that she yielded to the dictates of an affection, which, had she followed her own inclinations, would have led her to share a throne with him, if such had been her lot. They purchased the lease of a small farm between them, and retired to it, determined to endeavour by close attention, and strict economy, to avoid the guilt of bringing a family into the world to abject poverty, and its almost constant attendant, vice.

The education which the young ladies had received, the cultivation of their father, and the society they had mingled in, could not fail to impart a polish and elegance both of mind and manners to Mrs. Vandeleur and her sisters, which produced different effects on their different tempers. Some, when their father’s death deprived them of these advantages, preferred brooding over past enjoyments in solitary retirement, or boasting of them among humbler

friends, to forgetting them in any subordinate station ; while Mrs. Vandeleur, with a superior mind, and more real dignity of character, only looked back to more prosperous times with grateful acknowledgment for the means she had acquired in them, of rendering her husband's lowly home more agreeable to him, and of educating her family herself, without incurring the expense of other teachers.

All this promised fairly ; but when, after about nine years of wedded happiness, Mr. Vandeleur paid the forfeit of his life, for the imprudence of standing out too long under violent rain, in his anxiety to see some part of his harvest made safe from injury, the scene to his widow was sadly changed. He left her with two children, a boy and girl ; and although, by his prudent and diligent management, they had hitherto found their little property amply sufficient for their wants and moderate wishes, Mrs. Vandeleur soon found the difference between a

master's eye and that of a timid woman, now sunk in the depths of affliction.

Still, she felt unwilling to part with what had been purchased in such happy times, and cultivated and improved by so dear a hand ; and it was not until an event occurred which deprived her home of half its remaining charms, that she could allow her mind even to dwell upon the necessity of parting with it.

The death of her little girl, which took place within the year after that of her father, had such an effect upon the mind of the poor widowed mother, that, to save her from sinking altogether under the pressure of her calamity, she felt it was now become absolutely necessary for her to seek to engage her attention in some scene, not calculated every moment to remind her of her double bereavement.

Her noble boy, now about nine years old, she felt already called for other instruction than she could afford him, even although she had stepped

a little beyond the limits usually prescribed to her sex, and gave him herself his first rudiments of Latin. This was a serious, indeed an awful consideration to her; for of inferior English schools she had a horror instilled into her by her highly-educated father, and at an expensive one she had not the means of placing him, and at the same time supporting herself.

In this dilemma it occurred to her to write to Lord Hampton, on one of whose estates her farm was situated, to request of him to take it off her hands. All intercourse had indeed ceased between her family and his, since her father's death, and her removal to a distant part of the country; but his character was so well known to her, for considerate kindness and liberality, that she preferred a direct address to him to any intermediate application.

Her feelings were in some degree soothed by a letter from himself soon after, saying that the following autumn, which was the time she named, the farm should be taken off her hands

upon her own terms. She was not so weak as not to appreciate and rejoice in this liberal acceding to her wishes, yet she nearly effaced the characters of the letter in her tears. There is scarcely anything makes one weep so much as a favour conferred cheerfully and kindly, in the belief it is giving pleasure, which yet it is only severe necessity could induce us to accept: it shows us, somehow, so plainly how little our feelings are understood by others.

Young Vandeleur happened to run past the window with his dog, as his mother was thus engaged, and his quick dark eyes instantly perceiving her affliction, he sprang into the house, and shutting out his dog, contrary to his wont, as if he felt it was no scene for him, threw his arms round his mother's neck, and leaned his head on hers in silence. He had been accustomed to see her weep, and supposed it still to be for the same cause. At last he perceived the letter lying open on her lap, and her eyes, now and then, fix themselves on it.



“Dearest mother,” he said gently, “just tell me if anything new has happened to afflict you?”

“No, my sweet boy, it is not affliction that makes me weep,—it is weakness, folly, sinfulness!”

“Nay, mother, whatever it is, let me share it.”

“Even such as I have described it, Godfrey?”

“Even so, mamma: if you are suffering from it, I will share it with you.”

Need it be told that the mother kissed the brown cheek of her manly boy? “But Godfrey, I fear the news will afflict you on your own account.”

The boy started, and his innocent mind ran hastily over the catalogue of his favourites,—his dogs, his bullfinch, his father’s gun.

“What is it, mamma?”

“Should you be very sorry to go from hence, Godfrey?”

“Go from hence!—no, mamma. I know I must go from hence some time; and, only for



you, I wish I were in the army now, to fight that young general who is oppressing the poor Italians."

"Why, whom did you hear speaking of General Bonaparte?"

The boy reddened and looked down: he had learned not to speak of his father unnecessarily to his poor mother.

"Well, but Godfrey," she resumed, stifling a sigh, "it is not to go into the army, but to go and live elsewhere, and to give up this place for ever."

"Indeed, mamma, I don't care much if Cæsar, and Pompey, and old Corcoran come with us: Whistle I can bring in my hand."

"Your whistle, boy!"

The boy laughed.

"No, mamma, not *my* whistle, but Whistle the bullfinch."

"It is nearly as bad. Go, child—go out and play." And she pushed him from her, with a kind of jealous affection.

The child lingered in the room, evidently disconcerted. The course of the mother's tears was checked, and she rose to leave the room, saying as she passed him, "What is the matter? why don't you go out and play? I'm not angry with you."

"No, mamma, but worse—you are disappointed with me, and what could I do else?"

"Nothing, child; it was I was wrong—unreasonable. There, (kissing him,) go away now to your Cæsar; see, he's sitting at the window looking in for you."

How little even the fondest and most attentive of parents sometimes know the workings of a child's mind! Doubtless Mrs. Vandeleur thought that, in thus condescending to allude to his dog, she had proved to her son that all unpleasant feelings had passed from her mind: but it is not until custom and the habits of society have taught us that *words* are all that we can be called upon actually to acknowledge, that the more natural evidences of our feelings are overlooked.

It was not until the child was asleep that night, that his mother learned the true workings of his manly little heart. He was aware that she was in the habit of going over to look at him in his little bed every night before she retired to her own, as the last sweet duty that depended on his earthly parent, before she gave him up for the night to his heavenly one; and although, in spite of all his efforts for a quarter of an hour against it, sleep had closed his eyes long before she came up, she found laid upon his warm and rosy cheek a letter directed, in his childish hand, "To mamma." She opened it in no small surprise, and read the following lines, which we venture to present to the reader, as affording the first dawnings of a character in which we hope they are already somewhat interested.

"Mamma, who is the wisest, best,  
With which a child was ever blest,  
Once told me we must leave our home  
Upon the strange wide world to roam;  
And ask'd if I should greatly grieve  
My own nice darling home to leave.

What could I say? Papa had taught me,  
No matter what regret it brought me,  
To try to spare mamma all pain :  
And if she cannot here remain,  
Was it for me to grieve her more  
By counting all our losses o'er ?  
Should I have said ' Mamma, don't go  
From where papa and Jane lie low ;—  
Oh, do not leave the darling spot  
Where he so often bless'd his lot ;  
Leave not the pretty chestnut-tree  
Where he used often have his tea ;  
Leave not the rose and jasmine bower  
He twined to shade you from a shower ;  
Leave not the spot which you have said  
Was sacred by the honour'd dead :—  
Was it for me to say all this,  
Just for myself to gain a kiss ?  
I would not make my mother cry  
For twenty kisses more — not I.  
I'd rather try to make her feel  
My heart was made of wood or steel,  
Which, though they may be cut full deep  
For use, will never melt or weep.  
And if I named my dogs and bird,  
'Twas but to show, upon my word,  
That all that I could bring about  
With ease to her I would not scout.  
And as they love me, I'd regret  
To leave them here behind to fret :  
But if this would her grief incur,  
Why let them fret instead of her."

It may be thought that Mrs. Vandeleur's most prudent and most proper part, on reading this little effusion, would have been to have kissed her child's cheek with such softness as if his life depended on his not being wakened, and to reserve all further expression of her feelings until he came to her next morning. But different circumstances bring different feelings and different modes of acting : the former would perhaps have been the most natural to the happy wife who could have flown to the bosom of her husband, and there given utterance to all she felt.

With the lonely and widowed mother of little Godfrey the case was very different, and she neither could nor wished to restrain herself from rousing her boy, by murmuring on his cheek, " Godfrey, Godfrey, my son, speak to your mother and forgive her."

The child wakened, started, and stared wildly round him for a moment, utterly forgetful of all that had passed. Presently, his eyes be-

coming more reconciled to the light, and falling on his own letter, the whole circumstance rushed at once to his mind, and with a smile and a blush he hid his face in his mother's bosom.

She held him there for more than a minute. "And these were your real feelings, my child?" she said at last.

The poet was all forgotten, and the simple answer, "They were, mamma," was all he whispered.

His mother seemed at a loss how to speak to him. She pressed his head for a moment more closely to her bosom; then gently raising his face, she took off his nightcap, that she might the more fully indulge herself in the sweet delusion of having already found another friend and guardian of her feelings in her almost infant child.

The verses, which it may well be believed she looked on with a mother's partiality, were in that hour forgotten even by her, and, from



the utter incapacity she felt to suit her feelings to mortal ears, she said, "Godfrey, my child, leave your bed for a moment and pray with your mother." Her prayer we shall not repeat ; but it taught her child, in that happy, glowing moment, the comprehensive lesson to give thanks for being already enabled to give happiness to his parent's widowed heart. That hour and that prayer never were forgotten. She replaced him on his little couch, and his happy spirit was soon away in fairy-land again.

Not so with her. The excitement of her feelings, although joyous, did not so rapidly subside : she seemed to have got a new spirit of exertion within her, and for that night, at least, she thought every sacrifice would be light to her for the sake of that noble boy ; and that, above all things, no selfish pining of hers should ever again cast a shade over his buoyant and joyous spirit.

One more consequence ensued from this little adventure. A mother's partiality is a thing of

so different a nature from a critic's justice, that it has not unfrequently been known blindly to beguile those it has loved best, into the fangs of the latter, where they perhaps barely escaped annihilation, physical as well as moral. And really I think this very reflection should make critics merciful, as it belongs not to mortals to visit the sins of the father upon the children.

In the present instance, however, it only led to Mrs. Vandeleur's thinking it of even more importance than she ever did before, that her son should receive the most liberal education ; and though a sensible and even a clever woman, her mind floated away for a moment to the bench or the stall, if not to the woolsack or the mitre themselves : a field-officer's epaulettes indeed glittered before her eyes for a moment ; but from them she turned away, for they were presented to her on the point of a sword steeped in blood.

As the preliminary step, however, to all or

to any of this advancement, she remembered that it was necessary she should herself make some exertion, and before sleep closed her eyes, the true-hearted woman, and affectionate mother, had come to the determination of looking out, between the present time and the following autumn, for a situation as governess in some family, of such character and consequence, as should take from the office any appearance of degradation, that could hereafter call a blush into the cheek of the son for whose sake she made the sacrifice, and for whose future fate she looked so high.

Fortune, or a higher Power, seemed to favour her laudable resolution on this head. About a month before the time arrived at which she was to give up her sweet cottage-home, and while she was yet anxiously looking around for another, in which to remain until she could permanently settle herself to her satisfaction, or rather according to her judgment, she received the following letter from Lord Hampton :—

“ DEAR MADAM,

“ At the time I received your letter on the subject of your farm, my mind was so painfully occupied by an impending domestic calamity, that I could only reply to the application in the very briefest terms. You have doubtless since heard of the loss I have sustained, and that my little girl is deprived by death of her excellent mother. Believe me, madam, I am at all times sincerely interested in whatever concerns you, or any member of your esteemed father's family ; yet I am not by any means certain that selfishness may not be my chief motive in the proposal I am about to take the liberty of making to you. Should there be in it anything unpleasant to your feelings, or wholly foreign to your views, I hope you will excuse it on the assurance, that no motives should have induced me knowingly to offend against either. My intention is immediately to procure for my little girl, the advantage of the constant and affectionate care of some lady, whose mind,

manners, and accomplishments, may in some degree lessen to her the loss she has sustained. I am aware how difficult it is to meet with such who would condescend to the situation; but allow me to point out to you, madam, that, as far as is possible, it shall in this case, for my own satisfaction, be divested of every appearance of a subordinate one. The lady shall have the entire control and management of the child, who is only five years old, with *carte blanche* for her expenses as to masters, attendants, and minor matters; and a small suite of apartments, for her own and her little protégée's use, in whichever of my residences she may prefer. At the same time I should hope always to be favoured with the lady's presence at my dinner-table, and as much as possible in my drawing-room; as it is quite my hobby that every one, as well as the child herself, should understand that her maternal friend is not a mere governess. For other considerations, I have no hesitation in saying we cannot fail to agree, as I



should think almost any remuneration too small for one who was qualified to meet my wishes on this important matter : and in casting my eyes around me, I can think of no one who, from my own knowledge, and pleasing recollection of her various excellences and superior mind and manners, seems to me to unite all I could desire so completely as Mrs. Vandeleur. Should it so happen that the offer meets your approbation, I shall, believe me, feel myself doubly gratified.

“ I have the honour to remain,

“ Dear madam,

“ Your friend and servant,

“ HAMPTON.”

“ London, August 17.”

It is unnecessary to dwell upon the gratitude, the delight, with which Mrs. Vandeleur received this proposal, magnificent of its kind. She clasped her boy in her arms ; and although floods of tears convinced him that their hour of parting was at hand, still there was something



in her embraces and her countenance, that told to his feeling and intelligent mind and heart, that there was joy mingled with her sorrow.

The farm with all it contained was soon after taken off her hands at a liberal valuation, the proceeds placed at interest in her son's name, and in less than a month he was settled at an excellent and highly respectable school in ——shire; and she proceeded to join Lord Hampton's family in London, where they had remained in consequence of the marchioness's illness.

The school at which Mrs. Vandeleur had placed her son by the advice of one of her brothers, combined what in her situation were great advantages. It was one of those schools which were established at the time that the French Revolution sent so many to seek refuge in England, partly on the speculation of being able to procure foreign teachers on very low terms; and as it was conducted by an English gentleman of sense, prudence, and judgment, it did in-

deed afford the most polite and liberal education on comparatively moderate terms. But besides these substantial advantages, it had one more in the eyes of the fond mother, which perhaps would have outweighed them all had she listened to her feelings rather than to her reason : happily in the present instance they went hand-in-hand.

The school was situated about six miles from Seaton, the favourite country residence of the Marquis of Hampton ; which gave to her heart the hope that she should frequently, in the summer months, be able to see her boy ; though her propriety and native dignity determined her to keep the matter of his vicinity a secret from Lord Hampton. Accordingly, when he on her arrival politely inquired how she had disposed of her son, she slightly answered, that she had placed him at school in the country by the advice of one of his uncles ; and the matter passed from Lord Hampton's mind.

It is now time to say a few words of her

little pupil. The young Countess of Seaton was the only child of the Marquis of Hampton. She inherited her mother's title, and was heiress to the greater part of her father's possessions. From a long line of noble ancestry on both sides of her house, the Lady Seaton derived propensities and talents as noble ; but with them a loftiness and independence of character, which was perceptible at the very earliest age, and which it required the most watchful and judicious care of her maternal friend, to temper down into the gentle, amiable, and feminine creature she afterwards became.

To check a spirit which in itself was all generosity, noble pride, and dislike of being controlled, would have seemed a superfluous, perhaps an indiscreet endeavour, to the many who deem such qualities the fit accompaniments of rank and power, as rendering their possessors properly alive to the distance between themselves and less fortunate mortals. But the judicious friend to whom the care of forming

Lady Seaton's character was committed, thought differently. Her study of the human heart, and her experience in life, alike tended to convince her, that the sense of one's own superior advantages over others much oftener requires the rein than the spur. Her efforts, therefore, all tended to render Lady Seaton *worthy* of the elevation of her rank ; and the plan she adopted to prepare her for commanding others, was by teaching her to command herself ;—an exercise which, without the risk of engendering pride, arrogance, or hard-heartedness, has the effect of forming that strength of mind, and decision of character, which are indispensable to the due employment of wealth or power.

Before her pupil had completed her tenth year, she already felt in some degree rewarded for the anxious care bestowed on her most arduous undertaking, when one day the little girl came running back to her from a walk, down which she had gambolled before her, with a blush of mortified pride upon her cheek, as she

exclaimed, “ I am humbled, dear madam, I am humbled ! I have been commanded by my passions, and I yielded to them :” and her lustrous black eyes swam in tears.

She had met the gardener carrying some fruit to the house, and had taken a rosy apple, which was to her forbidden fruit. She now handed it half-eaten to her governess ; and though offered permission to reap the fruits of her disobedience, she flung it from her in indignation and disgust.

Lady Seaton was beautiful, as I think most of the daughters of our English aristocracy are : it can scarcely be otherwise, with their delicately transparent complexions, which establish at once an impression of high nurture and refinement—their finely-formed noses, that distinguishing feature of race and even of country—and their fair shining tresses.

Lord Hampton lived as a great English noble ought to live, much in the world both in town and country ; and the young countess



was from her very birth accustomed to mingle with the *élite* of the earth. Mrs. Vandeleur was ever at her side. From the moment that Lord Hampton made clear his wishes that it should be so, she took her station in society at his house, and conducted herself in it, with such becoming and inherent dignity, aided by graceful and polished manners, that she was as much respected and esteemed by every class, as if she never had moved out of that elevated sphere.

It was impossible that this judicious attention to his wishes, and her complete success so far in the education of his heiress, should pass unnoticed by a man of Lord Hampton's discernment and liberal feelings. Notwithstanding her noble salary, he still felt himself her debtor, and looked forward to the pleasure of marking his approbation by forwarding her son in whatever profession he should select, whenever he became old enough to profit by it: and once or twice of late he asked what his age was, and expressed a hope that he was receiving a



thoroughly good education. Perhaps, had he known that, at the moment he made these inquiries, the boy was so near to him, his kind consideration and respect for Mrs. Vandeleur had led him even further. The matter, however, was destined not to remain longer a secret.

It was customary with Lord Hampton, when in the country, to take what he called constitutional rides, in the morning, round his grounds, before any of his guests appeared. One morning, when riding as usual along a broad walk that ran all round the demesne inside the wall, his attention was attracted by loud and angry voices, and sounds of contention, which seemed rapidly increasing. At last the words—"I am unwilling, sir, to bid my men fire upon you," convinced him there was no time to be lost if he meant to interfere; and galloping to the nearest gate, which happened to be a very short distance before him, he was in a moment or two up with the party. It consisted of a recruiting serjeant, a party of soldiers, a young

lad (who seemed just enlisted, and whose bullet-eyes and large stolid face were swelled even beyond their usual dimensions by blubbering), and two young gentlemen, one of whom appeared to be from fifteen to sixteen years of age, tall and handsome-looking, with large dark eyes, which now, in his anger, seemed to emit sparks of fiery indignation; the other, some years older, and evidently, as well by his appearance, as by his accent, a foreigner.

There was a temporary cessation of hostilities the moment Lord Hampton appeared; and upon his inquiring the cause of the disturbance, both of the young men hesitating how to answer, the serjeant proceeded to inform him, that he was conducting the young recruit, on whose collar he still kept a firm grasp, and whom he stated to have enlisted the evening before, to the next town, where the regiment was quartered, when he was pursued by the taller of those two young gentlemen, (pointing out the young Englishman,) who not only urged and

instigated the young candidate for martial honours, to throw back the bounty-money he had received, but threatened to beat the serjeant and assist him in escaping.

“ Indeed, my lord,” added the man, who knew Lord Hampton’s appearance, “ I think him mad, for my part ; for he offered to enlist himself instead of this here chap.”

“ And this other young gentleman ?” asked the marquis with a look of grave and determined patience and inquiry.

“ That other young gentleman, my lord, I know nothing of: he came up but now, and was taking my part against this other madcap. I was loth to go to extremities with him, seeing they are both pupils of Mr. Hamilton’s establishment near this.”

“ How far off ?”

“ Five miles or so, my lord.”

“ Proceed, serjeant, on your route,” said the marquis with authority, “ and I shall make it my business to inquire from Mr. Hamilton how

it happens that his young gentlemen are wandering the country at these hours, and disturbing persons in the discharge of their duty."

"By Heaven he shall not proceed, though!" exclaimed the English youth. "My lord, I beg your pardon; I have the highest respect for your character and person;"—(the marquis bowed haughtily and impatiently, the young man coloured and went on:)—"these are not words of course, my lord, as you would know if you knew who I am; but this man shall not carry off William Henshawe, whom he enlisted in a fit of intoxication, and leave his family to ruin of every dreadful description."

At this moment the other young man stepped hastily forward, and taking hold of the arm of the speaker, "Come, come," he said, "recollect yourself, my friend, there has been enough of this; don't offend Lord Hampton, and—" he whispered very rapidly a French sentence in his ear, the purport of which was a promise, by everything sacred, that there should be no

more on his part of a certain affair which was understood between them ; and added, in the same low and rapid tone, "Take my advice and drop it, or people will very fairly suspect your own intentions."

"Villain and coward !" exclaimed the young man, shaking off his hand ; and forgetful of where he stood, in whose presence, and everything but his indignation at the moment, he struck his school companion a violent blow across the face with a switch he held in his hand.

In the impulse of the moment the blow was returned, and it was only on a muttered challenge being given, and accepted, that they were dragged asunder.

The Marquis of Hampton, highly incensed, once more commanded the serjeant to proceed ; telling him at the same time, if he was again interrupted, to order his soldiers to do their duty.

"Then let them fire on me !" exclaimed the young man, "if so it must be ; and do you,



William Henshawe, either quietly proceed and leave your sister to destruction, or stand by me and share my fate.”

This speech, uttered as it was with all the vehemence of truth, as he was far from intending that matters should proceed to any extremity with the headstrong youth, however he might wish to intimidate him from interfering further with the serjeant, attracted the marquis’s attention, and afforded him a pretext for again inquiring into the merits of this case, which at present appeared rather extraordinary.

He no sooner made known his wishes to that effect, than the young Frenchman coming forward, apologised politely and handsomely for his share in the matter, and said, that being unwilling to trespass further on the Marquis of Hampton, or to discuss the business any further on the high road, he should beg leave to retire, certain that, whatever passion might lead his young friend to be guilty of, he could rely



implicitly on his honour and veracity, and that he would assert nothing to the prejudice of any one which he could not prove, and therefore he left his character with confidence in his hands." He turned to depart.

"It shall not avail you not one single iota ! all the fine speeches you can make to me," returned his companion ; "the more honour and truth I possess, the worse for you ; so stay and defend yourself if you can, for I tell you plainly my generosity will not be the least worked on to spare you in your absence."

But ere this exhortation, however loudly uttered, came to its conclusion, it was borne by the wind far from the ears it was intended for.

There was a moment's silence ; the marquis was a man of too much discernment not to be struck with the reliance on the young man's honour and truth, and, as it seemed to him, his generosity also, evinced by his companion and now antagonist ; and he waited for the de-

fence of his late conduct with a secret hope that it would prove a sufficient one. But the youth seemed suddenly to have lost his courage and bold bearing, and stood with an irresolute and vexed expression of countenance.

At last the marquis said, "Well, young gentleman, I thought you were about to give some explanation of this strange and disgraceful scene?"

"I had intended it, my lord, if that fellow had stayed: but, as he said, it is a different thing to accuse a man to his face and let him defend himself, from speaking behind his back what, after all, I certainly can not swear to."

"Come, come," said the marquis, "this is either trifling, or the very romance of youthful generosity, which, if it be allowed to run headlong at first, and outstrip justice, will soon exhaust itself, and in riper years be left as far behind, by justice: now prudence should be the charioteer, and from the very onset make the two pull side by side together."

“ I understand and like your metaphor, my lord ; but, somehow, one cannot jump at once to everything that’s right : however, I shall try to unite them as well as I can.” And he proceeded to inform Lord Hampton that William Henshawe was the only son of a poor blind old woman, whose chief means of support was the employment this youth received at Mr. Hamilton’s school, where he almost constantly resided, and, being an active and unassuming lad, was frequently admitted to join in their rougher exercises. It happened that, the day before this memorable one, there was a great cricket-match, and the winners gave an entertainment, at which poor Henshawe became so intoxicated, that, on his way home, meeting the recruiting-serjeant, he fell an easy prey to his allurements.

“ Well, my good sir,” said the marquis, in a tone of rather surprised interrogation, “ and if the youth chooses it, what then ? I am sorry to say, it is the way half our soldiers are en-

listed; and we must not be too nice in these times."

"Chooses it, sir!" exclaimed the young man, while the candidate for martial fame groaned in spirit, but seeing his cause in better hands, had the wisdom to leave it there. "Chooses it, my lord! his heart is breaking at this moment; and he would be a brute if it were not so. Is it not, Henshawe?—why don't you answer?"

"I heared no question asked of I before: but no, Mr. Vandeleur, no,—my heart is as tough as another's, I warrant."

Neither Lord Hampton nor even the young gentleman himself could refrain from a smile at this attempt, on the part of the *soldat malgré lui*, to assert his manhood, even against the chance of his escape.

"Well, but I mean," resumed his young champion, "would you not be happy to be let off? I know that, while I live, I never shall forget the scene I witnessed this morning in your

mother's cottage.—“ Oh, my lord !” turning to Lord Hampton, “ it was really fearful to see the large tears falling from her sightless eyes !” and the young man seemed really to shrink from the recollection.

“ And may I take the liberty of inquiring how you happened to be in his mother's cottage at so early an hour ? Methinks Mr. Hamilton gives his young gentlemen a loose rein.”

“ The poor old woman sent for me, sir, when she heard what had befallen her son.”

“ There is something in all this which I do not yet see through,” said the marquis ; “ and until I do, I cannot interfere further in the matter than to protect the serjeant in the discharge of his duty. How came a poor blind old woman to select you amongst all the gentlemen in the country to rescue her son ?”

“ Why, my lord,” replied the youth, blushing and hesitating, “ I happened to be the only one—at least the one she knew best ; I had seen her more than once before.”

The marquis noticed his hesitation with a scrutinizing eye. "Oh, you had! Pray, does her family only consist of this young man and herself?"

"No, sir; he has a sister—she has a daughter; and, in fact, it is chiefly on her account ———" He again hesitated.

"Humph!" said the marquis, and turning to the serjeant, was about once more to bid him proceed with his recruit, when Henshawe, no longer able to continue silent, exclaimed, "Oh, sir! oh, my lord! do not suffer me to be lost through Mr. Vandeleur's generosity!—for, indeed, it is only that he is loth to speak against that other gentleman, though why I do not know, for they never were friends like—not they."

"Well, sir, never mind canvassing this gentleman's motives: if you have anything to say, let me hear it at once, or I shall ride off and leave you to your fate."

"Well, sir, the thing is just this, you see:



My sister Sally, my lord, is a very young and very pretty girl—younger than I, please your lordship, by two years—and every one says handsomer by twice also. She is not a giddy or a silly girl either; but the best of us is no match for love betimes; and she coming one day of a message to me at Mr. Hamilton's, though mother never would let her inside the gate, this gentleman and the chap that's just gone happened to pass at the time and saw her: and the upshot was, that the other lad took a fancy to her; and I don't say but Sally might have liked him too, for he's very coaxing in his own French way, sir: and what makes me think Sally liked him is, that when Mr. Vandeleur here came to warn my mother of it, and to keep a strict eye on Sally, Sally cried greatly, sir, and took it very much to heart; and, as I found out afterwards, again from Mr. Vandeleur, that they still saw each other: and it's wonderful, please your lordship, how they do contrive it. I know, if ever I'm in love,

it must be above-board, and in the face of day; for I never should have a head to plan these stolen meetings.”

“ It is the heart, not the head, man, that plans them,” said the marquis, laughing. “ But go on.”

“ Well, then, my lord, I had to speak to her myself, and to take my oath to her, that if it was not dropt that minute, I’d go to Mr. Hamilton, and get young De Brons turned from the school. And what do you think, sir, but after all she managed, I think, to let him know this; for he grew very stiff with me for a while, until all of a sudden he said yesterday he would forgive my unjust suspicions of him—though indeed, sir, I never asked him; and he took me into a room in the evening, and made me drink more than I ever drank before, as he said, to drown all unkindness.”

“ Then d—me !” exclaimed the serjeant,

now coming forward, “ since that’s the way of it, if I don’t tell the whole truth. I happened to meet this young Frenchman yesterday morning, my lord, about their own grounds, where I went to look at the cricket-match, thinking it a good place to pick up idlers ; and this young man entered into conversation with me about my business, and all that ; and at last he pointed out this here fellow to me,—told me he had a great mind to enlist, only for some wish of not vexing an old mother, and that if I contrived to meet him at night I should have a fine stout soldier for my trouble. I met the lad, drunk to be sure ; but then you know, my lord, as you said yourself, we cannot be too nice in these times : but if I had known how the matter lay, I’d have blown my fingers off before they tendered him the bounty. I saw his sister this morning ; and a lovely beautiful girl she is, my lord—and hung on his neck

crying as if she would have died there ; and it was the hardest job of duty I ever did to tear him away."

"Yet, she seems but a giddy, headstrong girl, even by his own admission," said the marquis, turning to Vandeleur.

"No, indeed, she is not," he answered eagerly ; "if she were, I should almost fear less for her : but she is innocent and confiding, and so young and lovely ; and I have reason to think that this fellow has tried to turn her brain by some jargon of French philosophy, which hitherto the poor girl has withstood ; but if her brother leaves her, he leaves her to destruction. A blind old woman is no protector for such a girl."

"She seems to have another and a more efficient one in you," said the marquis, smiling gently.

"No, my lord," replied the youth, colouring, "I am not, as you are well aware, a fit protector for her, except in an extremity like this."

“ Then, may I ask finally, if this is all pure and disinterested benevolence ; or what makes you so much interested in this young girl ? ”

“ I shall tell you frankly, my lord : it is *not* pure, unmixed benevolence. I feel myself in some degree responsible for the girl’s safety on this occasion, because it was not only I who first brought her brother to Mr. Hamilton’s, but having once seen her by chance, I was struck with her exceeding beauty ; and the fatal day that Henshawe mentions her having come to the gate, I was walking about with this De Brons, and meeting Henshawe running very fast, we asked him where he was going ; he said, to speak to his sister at the gate ; upon which I very giddily, and of course not foreseeing the consequence, proposed to De Brons to go round by another way and see this girl returning, as she was so extremely beautiful. This is the whole story, my lord.”

“ And have you never seen her since ? ”

“Never until this morning, and once or twice at a distance with De Brons. And it is from his own brutal jesting that I suspect what I mentioned of the sophistry with which he is endeavouring to corrupt her principles.”

“Then allow me to shake hands with you, young gentleman,” said the marquis, frankly advancing to him; “and I freely ask your pardon for any distrust I may have shown. But why, instead of proceeding to violence, did you not try the golden key to the serjeant’s heart?”

“I did, my lord; but my stock is but slender, it would not do.”

“I like you not the worse for that acknowledgment. Well, I promise you this matter shall be arranged to your entire satisfaction, and Sally shall be taken care of. I dare say the Henshawes are tenants of mine.”

“We are, indeed, my lord!” exclaimed William.

“Very well. Serjeant, proceed on your way



with your recruit for the present ; you have done your duty with propriety and prudence. —Mr. Vandeleur, as I dare say Mr. Hamilton's breakfast-hour is past, you will do me the favour of breakfasting with me. By the bye, you will meet a lady, a namesake of yours, at my house ;” and he turned his eyes more fully on the young man as he recollected this circumstance.

Vandeleur looked down with an expressive smile, and a slight colour rose to his cheek.

“What ! will you not accept of my invitation, young gentleman ?”

“The lady of whom you spoke is—my mother, my lord.”

“Your mother, young man !” exclaimed the marquis in much astonishment. “How is it that I never knew of your being so near us ?”

The young man smiled ingenuously in the marquis's face, as he replied, “Rather, how should you, my lord ?”

“Why did not Mrs. Vandeleur inform me

of it, in order that I might have shown you some attention ?”

“ I rather believe, my lord, it was that she might not encroach on your kindness that she did not mention it.”

“ She is an excellent, noble-minded woman !” exclaimed the marquis ; “ and I am very glad to find, sir, that she has a son worthy of her. But come to breakfast ; I shall enjoy her surprise. And harkye, young gentleman, I think you are too much grown for Mr. Hamilton’s school at present, and a little too fiery withal ; a year or two at a military academy would do you more good ; and if a pair of colours lie in your way, they are yours from this moment ; though some might think that the punishment for endeavouring to deprive a serjeant of his recruit might be better chosen.”

“ Not when I was willing to go myself in his place,” said the young man smiling, and slightly blushing at the Quixotic offer he had made in his desperation. “ But let that convince you,

my lord, that in giving me a commission, you have fulfilled the first wish of my heart." And he gracefully raised his hat as his bright eyes glowed with rapture and enthusiasm.

The marquis caught the infection, and again shook hands with him. "Well, then, you return to Mr. Hamilton's no more;—nay, I insist upon it for my own reasons. Your mother, or my man of business, can settle with him: you must promise me to go there no more. What! you seem annoyed, young man?"

"Oh, my lord, I should be so sorry to deceive you at any time, but particularly at this moment; but indeed I have an engagement that I must keep."

"Well, I guess to what you allude; I heard it muttered between you: but we shall see to that; it can be settled as well anywhere else, and better than near your school. So now I take it as granted that I have your promise."

Still the young man blushed, hesitated, and looked on the ground.

“ Come, come, young gentleman, if I am interfering too much in your concerns, say so at once, and I have done : but I can remain trifling here no longer.”

Vandeleur raised his eyes for a moment full to the marquis's face, as if to read his countenance ; then apparently satisfied with the result, he said frankly, and without removing his eyes from the marquis's, though with a very vivid blush, “ I should like, my lord, to see old Mrs. Henshawe once more, and — and to tell Sally that I was the means of rescuing her brother, and to put her on her guard more fully against De Brons : she might listen to me now.”

The marquis laid his hand kindly on his shoulder : “ She might, and I dare say she would,” he said, smiling ; “ yet is the office no fit one for you. Come, do not tarnish the good work you have begun, by letting self creep in. Take this from an old man : it is at the moment we have done a good deed, that we should be most on our guard ; for then we are not only

ready to think we may trust ourselves to any lengths, but even to allow of some little indulgence as a kind of reward. Believe me, you are no more fit to be Sally's adviser or protector, for having protected her from another, than you were before ; and if you would raise no suspicions to the girl's prejudice, after this morning's adventure you will never see her more : I told you she should be taken care of. Come," he said kindly, holding out his hand and smiling, " I really can wait no longer for my breakfast : as we go along you can tell me who this De Brons is."

The young man not only accepted the hand held out to him, but caught and pressed it between both his, until the marquis smiled : he seemed but for very shame inclined to raise it to his lips.

" I like you, my lord, and I like your mode of giving advice ; and if I ever disgrace your recommendation, I hope the last disgrace of the infamous will fall upon me as a punishment."

The marquis was a man of worth and respectability, yet perhaps never, in the long course of his public career, did any eulogium go more home to his heart than this simple effusion of gratitude from the ingenuous and intelligent lips of unsophisticated youth ! He returned the pressure of the young man's hand in silence, however ; and after they had proceeded a few steps towards the castle of Seaton, he again inquired of young Vandeleur who his foreign companion or antagonist was.

“ He is the son of a French nobleman, my lord,” replied Vandeleur, “ who fled with his family from France at the time of the revolution ; and I suspect De Brons is but a feigned name to suit their present circumstances. He has been for many years at Mr. Hamilton's school, partly to receive his own education, and partly to impart the French accent to the pupils. He is a strange sort of fellow ; and between him and a tutor that is there, who fled from France at the same time, though himself,



I believe, a German, some of the wildest doctrines and theories are disseminated through the school. I dislike the Frenchman more than the German, however."

"Is that from *national* or *natural* antipathy?"

"Natural, I think, my lord. One I think only wild and fanciful, the other deep and unprincipled."

"But why does Mr. Hamilton allow such dangerous companions among his pupils?"

"Why, strange to say, after what I have just said, De Brons only seems to have burst forth in this new light since Edelstein has come, which is not long. I don't think Mr. Hamilton is aware of it yet: the German professes to teach chemistry and his own language."

"Well, Mr. Hamilton should be made aware of this. But the time is, I think, at hand when those French *émigrés* can return to their country, and leave our English air unpolluted. *Mais nous voilà arrivés, mon ami.*"

We need not enter the house with them, or dwell on Mrs. Vandeleur's gratified surprise: it is enough to say, that Lord Hampton found means to hush up the quarrel between the young men, without injury to the honour of either, and that a year from that day saw the bright-haired English youth sailing away to join his regiment, then fighting in Italy.

It happened to be exactly the line of life he should have chosen for himself, even if fortune had not presented it to him in such seducing colours as made even his adoring mother feel it her duty to stifle and conceal every selfish pang she experienced upon the subject; and although, when she left Seaton to meet her boy-soldier in London, and bid him farewell previous to his embarkation, tears certainly did mingle with her blessings, still she commanded herself so as not to suffer the slightest murmur of discontent to escape her lips, but bade him go and prove himself worthy of his patron's favour.

The slight and graceful stripling knelt at her

feet in his new military undress ; and she parted the hair on his forehead, to prolong the sad pleasure she felt in gazing on him such as she knew she never should behold him again.

“ Mother, give me a lock of your hair,” he said, as he felt her fingers twining through his own dark curls.

“ Tush, silly boy ! my hair is not like this ; it is quite grey long since.”

“ And what then, mother ? is it for youth and beauty that sons love their mothers ? Come,” he said, “ the hour is drawing near, mother ;” and snatching a pair of scissors from the table, he himself cut off one of the greyest of the locks she still wore on her temples ; then affectionately kissing the spot he took it from, partly to conceal the emotion that rushed to his eyes at seeing how very grey it was, he rolled it up, while his mother stood wiping away her fast-falling but silent tears.

“ But what shall I do with it now ?” he exclaimed, “ that I may not lose it ? Mother,

I must commit yet another robbery : you must give me that little locket you wear round your neck, until I get a more *gentlemanly* mode of preserving it ;” and he took the ribbon hastily off her neck and threw it over his own.

“ Nay, but, Godfrey,” she exclaimed, “ my little pupil Lady Seaton’s hair is in it.”

“ Well, it shall not stay in it to profane yours—you can get plenty of it ;” and taking it out, he was about to throw it on the ground, when, struck with the beauty and softness of the little ringlet, he said gently, “ Well, it is too pretty to be insulted,” it may remain with yours as you love her so well !”

“ Oh, mother,” he continued, while he fixed the hair into the locket ; “ and so you tell me that Sally Henshawe is married to Sergeant Whitecross. Well, she may thank me for that ; for her own brother’s account of her, that morning that sealed my fate as well as hers, would have gone a short way towards it. Well, I ’m heartily glad of it : how good it was of Lord

Hampton to give her a portion ! and now, mind you, mother, when her first child is born, send her a christening present from me, and I'll repay you with some pretty gew-gaw from the Continent. And now farewell ! God ever bless you !” and the young soldier rushed hastily from the room, and from the house, as if he had not a care at heart, while he was remarked to be the saddest and most silent, for the rest of that day, on board the transport that bore him for the first time from his native country.

## CHAPTER V.

Thou 'rt not for me, and I 'll lay thee by,  
Deep, deep within my heart ;  
And the world, with its cold and searching eye,  
Shall never know where thou art.

*Anonymous.*

TEN summers, and ten winters, passed over the head of Vandeleur, before he stepped again on English soil. They were, however, literally ten years of "fame and glory."

Those were the days when the metal of every man was tried, and no warlike beating of the young heart, was forced to waste its energy against its own bosom. England was engaged in a struggle which could only have been decided in her favour, by the very flower of her bravest and her wisest. It was much to say, that even amongst them, and against no less



brave and wise antagonists, Godfrey Vandeleur played no unhonoured part. He was at once a brave soldier, and a very few years' experience made him an able leader. More than once, after severe actions, he received the thanks of his commanding officer, and was made honourable mention of in the public despatches.

How beat his mother's heart the while? Proudly?—no; humbly, fearfully, gratefully. She felt that his life was still in the hands of his Creator, and that His mercy alone could preserve it. It was spared, whilst hundreds—thousands, as loved, and perhaps as worthy to be loved, fell around him.—And on the strange termination which, to remote ages, will be analyzed with the deepest interest in the page of history—on the sending of him, who had fought and conquered until his name had gone forth over the earth as something either above or below human nature, to his first sea-girt prison, Godfrey Vandeleur returned to his native country and his widowed mother.

Promotion in such times is rapid; and the smooth-cheeked schoolboy, who left her ten years before an ensign of infantry, was now returned a captain of dragoons. When the struggle broke out on the Peninsula, he had exchanged into a cavalry regiment on service there, and which became as much distinguished by its good conduct as by its heavy losses in the field.

Other changes too he had undergone: the fiery, daring, almost unbroken youth, was tempered into the self-possessed and fashionable man. His joyous temper and animation were indeed in themselves unimpaired; but his intercourse with the world, and its most powerful interests, had taught him to command them and himself.

With the floods of tears, indeed, with which his mother received him to her arms once more, he could not choose but mingle his own for a moment; but in the next he was able to divert her mind from its agitation, by a lively description of whatever he thought would interest her most in his adventures.

“So I perceive, by my cards, that your son has returned, Mrs. Vandeleur?” said Lord Hampton to her one day at dinner.

“Is he indeed returned?” exclaimed his daughter: “why did you not tell me, Mrs. Vandeleur?”

“I did not suppose you remembered him.”

“I can scarcely say I do; but you might have given me credit for participating in anything so interesting to you.”

“And, as I have not forgotten him,” said her father, “I beg, Mrs. Vandeleur, that when he next calls, should I not be so fortunate as to see him myself, you will present my kind regards, and say that I hope to see him at dinner here whenever more agreeable engagements do not interfere. He has indeed done me much credit in my recommendation. I shall not send him formal invitations, as that might limit his visits to them; whereas I really wish to see him *en famille*, and I know he will not stand on ceremony with me.”

Mrs. Vandeleur bowed her gratified acknowledgments, while her pupil added, "We dine at home to-morrow, do we not? let him make his *début* then."

"Pray do," said the marquis; and Mrs. Vandeleur promised to be the bearer of the message.

Godfrey Vandeleur inherited all his mother's dignity of mind, or, as it used to be called in the olden time, "*proper pride*." He felt gratified, as she did, at the kindness of Lord Hampton's invitation: he felt it to be an honour; but to render it either a permanent or an advantageous one, he was well aware, depended upon his own manner of receiving it; for he could not forget that, gloss it over as he might, his mother still held a situation which only her own superiority prevented from being looked on as a subordinate one. He did not try to forget it; for he well knew that the sooner he should do so, the sooner would the world think it necessary to remind him of it: nor yet did he feel a wish that she should, for his sake, relinquish a situa-

tion in which he knew her to be permanently happy.

He read it in her letters when he was away, and he saw it in her appearance and whole manner when he came home. He found that the tie was changed between her and Lady Seaton, from governess and pupil, almost to mother and child, and that already it was an understood thing that they never were to separate.

Nor indeed, to a mind like Vandeleur's, would the stigma—if stigma it must be called—have been washed out by a late relinquishing of a situation she had held so long; and could it have been veiled over, he himself would have been the first to withdraw the veil. His nature was particularly frank, and, if the word can be tolerated, *honest*. Disguise of all kinds was so hateful, so troublesome to him, that he preferred the habit of never doing or saying anything that needed it. This he considered the only sure foundation of dignity. Respect *me*, not a phantom of your own creation !

Abroad, indeed, and in scenes where a man's conduct necessarily made his consequence, Vandeleur felt no superior, even in worldly estimation; and, as if such were his native sphere, he was happy, agreeable, lively, and universally courted and admired: but in London, in artificial life, and especially in Lord Hampton's house, he felt the case was altered, nor felt it with vulgar resentment, or affected disdain.

Many years before, he had thought deeply on the subject, and had come to the conclusion that it was, must, perhaps ought to be so; and instead of peevishly declining the opportunity that was now offered to him of at least stepping within "the magic circle," he gladly availed himself of it, only determining to conduct himself therein with such sensitive delicacy as should not leave room to the most haughty to say he had "forgotten himself." Accordingly, when he appeared next day at Lord Hampton's dinner-table, no one could have traced in the cold, reserved, silent, but perfectly self-possessed gen-



tleman, the lively, warm-hearted, energetic, and talented soldier, the spirit at once of the battle-field and of the foreign coterie. Lady Seaton kindly addressed herself to him several times; but as they sat at opposite sides of the table, their conversation was necessarily limited to a few short observations, and he did not seem anxious to prolong it.

He did not return to the drawing-room that evening, and Lord Hampton's invitation was specially repeated before he appeared again. But again and again he did appear, and still remained apparently cold, silent, and reserved. Happily, however, there was something so bland and polished in his manner, while uttering a casual, and unavoidable observation or reply to Lady Seaton, or her father, as caused every one to feel that there was "something in him:" still, as it seemed hopelessly shut up there, he was on the very point of being set down for ever as "a bore," when one day it so happened that two or three young men, who had just shown

themselves long enough in lancer caps and hussar jackets to add regimental rank to that which they inherited by courtesy from their fathers, met together at dinner at Lord Hampton's. After the ladies had retired, a trifling matter of dispute arose between them, which by degrees grew into a warm debate ; and as it seemed very unlikely to come to a favourable issue, the subject being a parallel between a late action on the Continent, at which neither had been present, and one of Marlborough's battles in Flanders, which neither of them appeared to remember very distinctly, Lord Hampton thought it time to make a diversion by saying, —“ If you seek to be convinced, gentlemen, I dare say Mr. Vandeleur can state the exact merits of the case, as he commanded a company, I think, at one of the actions you speak of ; and, I'll be bound, knows just as accurately every particular that is related of that to which you would compare it.”

Vandeleur, thus appealed to, turned at once

from the gentleman next him, with whom he had purposely entered into conversation to avoid the awkward position of a listener to a warm dispute ; and by his clear, prompt, and explicit answer, not only proved that not a word had been lost upon him, but that the decision he gave was a judicious and enlightened one. Fortunately for him, it so happened that neither of the disputants had been right ; therefore they readily granted to each other that neither could have been wrong, and Godfrey was hailed by both as a “ most upright judge.”

But his triumph ended not here. The conversation was continued ; and as just enough of the late feelings remained, to make each of the young noblemen prefer making him the common conductor of their opposite currents, he was of necessity completely drawn into it. It was not in his *system*, still less in his *nature*, churlishly to resist any overtures made to him ; and not only did he contrive adroitly to neutralize their conflicting opinions, but even to make one pass

over to the other, and by degrees he found himself the only speaker in the room.

Every one present was attracted by Lord Hampton's appeal to him; and though they were too polite to appear to observe it, their attention was more or less arrested; and presently each person—and there were some of distinguished talent as well as rank—found himself listening with pleasure and interest to Vandeleur's animated and graphic descriptions of the struggles in which he had so lately borne his part, and which had succeeded in leaving *them* free to enjoy the luxuries of their splendid homes.

“Come up to the ladies,” said Lord V. as soon as the conversation ceased. He was one of the late disputants, who had worn brilliant regimentals for a season, in the hopes of having to tell of deeds of arms himself, little suspecting that his noble parents had been successfully exerting their interest to prevent it.

“No,” replied Vandeleur, “I cannot. I am engaged for this evening.”

“Pho ! so am I ; but I shall not think of it for three hours to come.”

“But I am going to the opera, I believe,” said Vandeleur, still hesitating.

“There is nothing worth going there for to-night. Come up and hear Lady Seaton’s music for this evening, and let us go together to-morrow night.”

Vandeleur yielded ; and here was formed the first link of a chain which every day increased in length, and soon bound him to society in golden fetters.

It was not in human nature, still less in the frank and manly nature of Vandeleur, to distrust or to resist the flattering attentions he now received. He began to think that it was even due to Lord Hampton, that he should make all the recompense he could in return for them ; and accordingly throwing aside at once the cold, and to him unnatural and irksome reserve, in which he had wrapped himself at first, he gave way to his own animated and joyous spirits, and was soon considered as an acquisition wherever he



appeared. Nay, such is the caprice of fashion, that when once the circumstance of his mother's situation was partially forgiven, the other extreme was adopted, and it was now declared to enhance the interest with which it was their pleasure already to invest him ; and the dispute at Lord Hampton's dinner-table, which he had adjusted with so much success, though almost professional, gave a tone to the opinions that began to circulate in his favour. Fortunately, though not deeply read, his natural endowments, and such advantages as had been afforded him, together with strong volition, enabled him to support the part thus thrust upon him ; and presently not only were his lively repartees, and playful bons-mots, repeated in the most elevated circles, but "the unlettered soldier" was generally the one appealed to in any light literary dispute amongst ladies, or when any point requiring accurate recollection was discussed amongst gentlemen. It is not intended to assert that, in such cases, Godfrey Vandeleur's



memory, or even information, never was at fault ; but even when it proved so, his happy talent of supplying the deficiency with some *jeu d'esprit* of his own, or his eager search for the book which contained the passage in dispute, and his animated comments upon it, not only procured him forgiveness, where prepossession was already, albeit almost accidentally, so strong, but caused the task imposed, not seldom, to be considered "more honoured in the breach than in the observance." It need scarcely be added, that a very handsome person, and graceful address, contributed their share to this unexpected success.

There was one individual, and one only, with whom his intimacy, instead of increasing from the time of his first introduction, seemed latterly rather to decline.—Strange to say, that one was his mother's pupil !

Lady Seaton was at this time only twenty years of age. Her mind and character, however,

were fully developed ; and the native loftiness of her temper, and sense of her own situation, though mellowed by courteous manners, and gentle, amiable feelings, threw around her an air of dignity and reserve, which caused her to be, by common acquaintances, more generally admired and respected, than approached with any warmer, or more familiar feeling. The treasure of her love, or even of her friendship, was one, which, by the casual observer, was either believed to be as fabulous as the ring of Solyman—or, if it existed, to be almost as far beyond the reach of the most aspiring ; while her reception of the addresses of the few whom her beauty and splendid advantages had tempted to brave all this, did not tend to dissipate the idea. Not one of them had interested her feelings, or those of her father, sufficiently to induce her to think for a moment of leaving her happy home, or him to urge it.

When Godfrey Vandeleur was first presented to her, she received him with cordiality, and

almost friendly familiarity of manner, as the son of her beloved friend; which, if it did not of itself succeed in beguiling him from the cautious reserve he had imposed upon himself, certainly was not without its effect upon his feelings. But, as if his success in society, for his mother's sake, was the sole object she had in view; no sooner did that success appear to be ensured, than her manner to him became less distinguished in its kindness; and though now almost every evening meeting him in society, the brilliant and encouraging smile, which was ever ready to point applause to his first contributions to the game of fashionable conversation, was now scarcely ever vouchsafed, though ever eagerly sought; or if accidentally elicited, was latterly followed by a hasty blush:—that blush was never confined to her own cheek!

By one so deeply interested as was Mrs. Vandeleur, this change could not fail to be perceived; but she perceived it not only without resentment, but seemed to appreciate the pro-

priety from whence she believed it to proceed ; and, as if by mutual but tacit consent, her son's name was now scarcely ever mentioned between her and her pupil. The young man himself, whatever his feelings on the subject might be, scrupulously studied to suit his deportment to Lady Seaton's wishes ; and though his eye might occasionally glance furtively to see if *she listened* when others *applauded*, his conversation was now scarcely ever addressed exclusively to her, even when he availed himself of Lord Hampton's constant invitations.

“ What a handsome and agreeable man that Captain Vandeleur is, and seems to be ! ” observed Lady Augusta Starling one evening, as she and Lady Seaton came together up stairs, from the dining-room at Lord Hampton's, just after Lady Augusta's arrival in town for the season. “ Who is he ? or where is he fallen from ? ”

“ He is son to *my* Mrs. Vandeleur, and he has just *risen* from the campaigns on the Continent.”

“How risen? Was he in the ranks?”

Lady Seaton coloured. “No; I said he was son to Mrs. Vandeleur: he is of an ancient and respectable family, but he is risen in worldly honour and estimation.”

“What, then, is he a hero?”

“How you run, as ever, from one extreme to another! No, not a hero, but a very brave and gallant officer, who has distinguished himself, and been frequently mentioned in the despatches home.”

“Oh, that’s his label, is it? Is he horse or foot?”

“Horse; the —th Dragoons.”

“Oh, then he really is presentable, and perhaps an acquisition?”

“I hope so.”

“Nay, you know you are not responsible for every one who dines at your table being an acquisition—especially people that you cannot avoid asking.”

“I think I am, whenever many meet there:

it is only on *very* particular *friends* that we inflict bores, when we are sure of their being treated at least with respect."

"Nay, Lady Seaton, you hit as hard as if I had said Captain Vandeleur was a bore, instead of an acquisition."

"I never give any one credit for a lucky *escape*, nor take it myself."

"Well, I know there's no arguing with you ; but will you ask him to join our riding-party to-morrow, and I shall take him to task, and, if I find him all right, shall patronise him : will you ?"

"No."

"Why ?"

"Because I have never done so, and I don't think he would come."

"Not come !—not come at the call of beauty ! Then is he no true son of Mars !"

"He has at least done all I require of him as such, and, I believe, quite enough to dispense with our patronage."



“ Really ? Then you are serious that he is already one of *us* ? ”

“ As much so as you or I can make him, at least.”

“ Then he is to be petted, instead of patronised ? ”

“ *C'est selon.* ”

“ Nay, you are so very proper, and so mysterious absolutely, that I must have recourse to himself to find out what he is.”

“ More than a very handsome, and very agreeable young man, which you have yourself pronounced him ; and a good, and brave officer, which I have told you he is.”

“ Oh, dear, yes ! a thousand things more ! That is all merely surface ; the one for ladies in general, the other for gentlemen in general. Now I want to see what he is for *one*.”

“ That is, for Lady Augusta Starling ? Well, I hope he may be as successful as with the others.”

When Vandeleur came up to the drawing-

room, Lady Augusta Starling was at the piano, accompanying Lady Seaton's harp. Being extremely fond of music, he came over almost immediately to the instrument, and Lady Augusta soon found occasion to employ him upon several little commissions, for music, harp-strings, and so forth; and finally, as soon as the duet was over, she quickly turned round and led him into conversation. At first, Vandeleur, was as usual, distant and reserved; but as the giddy girl fluttered on, he was obliged to follow.

“ I dare say now, as you seem a grave and reserved person, that you would rather I had suffered the music to continue, than break it off for conversation : you seem to enjoy music greatly ? ”

“ I do ; but only for the soul and feelings it breathes forth ; conversation may have the same charm. ”

“ I trust you are not sentimental ? ”

“ Why ? ”

“Because, in that event, we had better become honourable enemies at once—easier characters to sustain, in general, than swearing an eternal friendship. I never could talk sentiment.”

“Nor listen to it?”

“Nor listen to it,” she repeated, quickly looking round on him with some astonishment.

“I assure you, nor I. So now as we are agreed in this, and as peace is such a novelty at present, I hope you will not be the first to break it.”

“Oh, apropos of peace and war, I understand you are quite a hero.”

Vandeleur bowed with mock gravity to the compliment.

“But is it true?”

“Before I answer, I must know from you what constitutes a hero.”

“Oh, if you know not that, it is evident that you are none. I am answered already.”

“On the contrary, the wise ones say we never know ourselves.”

“ Well, then, a hero means a very brave, a very noble, and a very generous man.”

“ I fear you have left out the chief ingredient.”

“ What is that ?”

“ To be a fortunate one. Now I should define a hero a first-rate actor, whose part is well cast, on a suitable stage.”

“ Do you mean to say that heroism is only acting ?”

“ I do ; but it is acting up to nature. How many hundreds, with all the ingredients of heroism that ever filled the breast of Scipio, have gone down unhonoured to their graves for want of the requisites I mentioned ! A man’s becoming a hero depends as much on others as on himself. It was Bonaparte made Wellington a hero.”

“ What am I to gather from all this ? — that you would have been a hero if opportunity had been afforded you ?”

“No. In such times as we have had, the stage was so extensive that every man might choose his own part ; and as I had all the requisites that *I* named, we must only suppose that I was not up to hero-pitch in some of those named by you. There was nothing in Bonaparte’s birth or circumstances to favour his becoming one : but the stage was decked, the *dramatis personæ* ready to support him ; he stepped forward and did his part nobly.”

“Can you say that, after all?”

“I can. I never saw Bonaparte—that, as it were, materialized mind—without a feeling of reverence, that, true Englishman as I am, I was obliged to do double duty to clear my conscience of. But I observe that Lady Seaton has been looking towards you more than once as if she wished to speak with you.”

“How can you see so far across this great room ? But do try, will you ?—Thank you.”

Vandeleur approached Lady Seaton, and

certainly felt rather awkward and officious, when she coldly answered, “No : I only looked to see whether she was waiting to play a particular duet with me, which she requested me not to forget this evening.”

Vandeleur repeated these words to Lady Augusta. “Oh, then, of course I must play it. *Adieu, mon héros—au revoir :*” and turning again to the piano, the music recommenced.

Vandeleur met Lady Augusta Starling the next evening, and the next ; and on the morning of the fourth, her brother, Lord Cranberry, called on him and invited him to dinner. Lady Augusta had made it a point to represent him as the pet of the Hamptons ; “a most extraordinary fine young man, a hero, and very clever—and a lion to boot.”

Vandeleur declined the invitation. Each time that he had met Lady Augusta, she had condescended to renew her familiar chatting with him, and rather to prolong it more and



more ; and although he was bound to follow as she led, still his good sense told him he was now treading on slippery ground, and that, all charmed as he was by his new sphere in life, it might only be for a season he was permitted to enjoy it. He felt the attentions he received to be a most delicious draught, and even permitted his spirits and feelings to be a good deal elevated by it ; but he had no mind to suffer them to become so intoxicated as either to cause him to be chased from that sphere as a presumptuous fool, or to pay for it the penalty of a broken heart. Accordingly, though many young fashionables now honoured him with “wreathed smiles,” and though to gentlemen he had a good deal relaxed, he still continued reserved and distant to ladies, and observed one invariable rule—never to ask any of them to dance.

It was while matters were in this train that Colonel and Mrs. Malcolm arrived in London. He was the colonel of Vandeleur’s first regi-

ment, and had ever since been in habits of intimacy with him. He had formerly been an acquaintance of Lord Hampton's, and Vandeleur met him and his lady at dinner there shortly after their arrival.

His reception by Colonel Malcolm did not serve to lessen the respect in which he was already held, while his meeting with the lady served to show that the reserve he thought proper to assume in general, could be laid aside at pleasure. To her he was attentive, kind, and even assiduous; while in her manner towards him there was something that partook of subdued respect, and even tender gratitude.

Colonel Malcolm, who was a sensible, gentlemanly man, and twenty years older than his pretty wife, seemed not only to understand, but even to appreciate and value, Vandeleur's attentions to her. The most cynical and censorious could therefore do no more than view it as a matter of curiosity,—and, truth to tell, the kindest and best did no less.

Vandeleur's star was still in the ascendant; and this circumstance only tended to swell the tide of his popularity still higher, by investing him with a degree of mystery which perhaps alone was wanting to complete the *engouement* that he created. None, however, were ever destined to be enlightened on the subject. Whatever the feeling or bond between the parties was, it was evident that Vandeleur was the benefactor, they the obliged—and *that* in some matter too delicate for common conversation.

All that ever transpired, if indeed it could be called anything, was one evening that Vandeleur excited the astonishment, and it is scarcely too much to say *envy*, of his fair young friends, by dancing a quadrille with Mrs. Malcolm.

As he restored her to the side of her husband, and was sauntering to another part of the room, Lady Seaton, whose partner had gone in search of her shawl, congratulated him on having broken the ice.

“It is not broken,” he replied playfully.

“ One single measure, which I took care to tread so lightly, has not broken it, else you had seen me ‘ borne down by the flying ;’ whereas I trust to resume the grave dignity of my deportment with double force.”

“ Oh !” exclaimed Lady Augusta Starling, who just then paused in the dance, close to where Lady Seaton and Vandeleur stood, “ are you not shocked to find what a coward Captain Vandeleur has turned out after all, Lady Seaton ? He is absolutely afraid to dance !”

“ Afraid of what ?”

“ Will you, pray, repeat to Lady Seaton all that you said to me the other day, as your reason for not dancing ?—about becoming too well acquainted with dangerously-charming creatures, and all that pretty nonsense about Cupid’s arrows being too fine to fly far ; and therefore, that while you keep at a certain distance, you are safe, &c. &c.—a bad compliment, by the bye, to those whom you honour with your attention : and, upon my word, now I think on’t, *I* ought

to be offended, for people say you talk to me more than to any other lady.”

Vandeleur and Lady Seaton, for the first time in their lives, irresistibly exchanged a momentary glance full of meaning, and each looked down to conceal an involuntary smile. But how different was the expression of the countenance of each next moment, when Lady Augusta continued—

“ And you, Lady Seaton, ought to be flattered, for I think you and he do not get on at all.”

Their eyes, which had again met, were now instantly, as it were, again shot asunder, and once more fastened on the ground, while a vivid and conscious blush suffused the countenances of each. Happily Lady Augusta was at that moment drawn away by her partner ; and as Vandeleur saw the gentleman whom Lady Seaton had despatched for her shawl returning with it, he just lingered to say, “ I danced with Mrs. Malcolm because she is a strange

here,—because I knew it would be acceptable, —and, more than all, because it would grieve me excessively, both for her sake and that of her excellent husband, that so innocent and amiable a person should have cause to feel herself neglected.”

It was enough: from that hour Mrs. Malcolm, during her stay in London, found herself supported in society by the leading star of fashionable life.



## CHAPTER VI.

Yet there was light around her brow,  
A holiness in those dark eyes,  
Which show'd, though wandering earthward now,  
Her spirit's home was in the skies.  
Yes ! for a spirit pure as hers  
Is always pure, even while it errs ;  
As sunshine, broken in the rill,  
Though turn'd astray, is sunshine still.

MOORE.

SPRING wore on. Lord Hampton and his family, with a select party of friends, prepared to remove for the Easter recess to one of his mansions in the country.

“ You will accompany us, Vandeleur ? ” he said one day at dinner, as the matter was talked over.

Vandeleur hastily declined it.

“ Why ? ” said Lord Hampton. And the

simple monosyllable was more confounding than any elaborate speech could have been; at least, it left him less time to frame an answer, and it suggested none itself. He stammered and looked distressed, then laughed at his own dilemma.

“Nay,” said Lord Hampton, smiling also, “if there is any ‘*business of importance*’ to detain you here, I am not the man to urge you to play truant: if not, let’s see you, that’s all.”

There was something in Lord Hampton’s smile that told plainly what the ‘business of importance’ was to which he alluded; and there was something in the young man’s feelings at the moment that irresistibly impelled him not only to disclaim all such engagements, but, in order to free himself completely from the imputation, unequivocally, and without regard to the apparent inconsistency, to accept Lord Hampton’s invitation.

He had no sooner uttered words to that effect, than his eye almost involuntarily asked how Lady Seaton was pleased at the circum-

stance : hers happened to be fixed on him at the moment with an expression of deep inquiry ; but on meeting his, she covered a slight degree of confusion in a graceful bow, as it were of acceptance of his promise to join their party. He could not ascertain whether she was glad or sorry.

Nor here let rustic though well-meaning parents, whose hopes suggest a lover in every “unmarried man” who approaches the seclusion in which they and their promising progeny are immured, exclaim, “How imprudent of Lord Hampton !” The Countess of Seaton had from her very birth been surrounded by the “choice spirits” of her age and sphere ; and the low-bred precaution of guarding her heart against their enchantments, no more entered into the head of her aristocratic father, than it did into the precepts of her refined and high-minded governess.

“And we have got another acquisition to our party, Theodosia,” continued Lord Hampton. “The Duke of Castleton is just arrived from

the Continent, and has promised to join us in a few days. You are aware that his father was a particular friend and near neighbour of mine in ——shire: our estates there adjoin each other.”

Lady Seaton bowed her head in silence, and the conversation turned to other subjects. In fact, this was one which was not quite agreeable to Lady Seaton. The young nobleman to whom Lord Hampton alluded, and whose return to London, after an absence of several years, was an event of considerable interest in the fashionable world, was one of England's wealthiest subjects; and whether it was from the old intimacy between Lord Hampton and the late duke, or whether from the general apparent suitability of the alliance—or whether, as is most probable, from both these causes together, not only Lady Seaton's immediate friends, but several others, looked upon that alliance as an event very likely to take place. She had, it could scarcely be said how, heard the whisper; and to one of her lofty and inde-

pendent spirit it was anything but an acceptable one.

The duke was young, handsome, and said to be agreeable ; but two days' domestication with him in the country served to convince Lady Seaton, that as his mind was of a very mediocre grade, and his character a negative one, he was not more of the latter than was absolutely unavoidable from his great advantages, and residence for some years in foreign courts ; while even those who were more predisposed in his favour, were not unfrequently surprised to find themselves turning from his insipid, but courtly compliments, to the half-concealed, but never bitter railery, of Godfrey Vandeleur.

When first the little party congregated at Lord Hampton's villa, Vandeleur felt a degree of awkwardness at being associated so closely with Lady Seaton, the anticipation of which alone had been sufficient to suggest his refusal to join the party. But it would have been totally inconsistent with her high breeding, and real dignity of mind, to suffer this to continue.



From the moment that her father had prevailed with him to make one in so small and so select a party in their own house, she felt that all private or especial reserve on her part must give way ; and that where each guest depended so much upon the other, it would be equally uncourteous, and unfair, either to throw a damp upon his agreeability, or to avail herself of it without the least return.

Vandeleur instantly felt the change in her manner, and was not only alive to its effect, but to its cause. His own delicacy of feeling enabled him to sympathise in hers ; and instead of peevishly or indecorously resenting her former reserve, he now determined to avail himself of the relaxation just as far as might meet her views, and no farther.

Like the attendants in the fairy tale, he endeavoured to anticipate her every wish, yet to conceal the hand that ministered to it ; and thus was unconsciously and tacitly established between them a sweet, subtile, but dangerous, because unacknowledged, sympathy.



In the riding parties, from which he could no longer be excluded, Vandeleur apparently neither sought nor avoided her side; and although when any laughing appeal from her, or other accidental circumstance, called him there, it generally so happened that he kept the place until the ride was over, yet the evening never seemed to cement the intimacy. He approached not the harp or piano when she played, and was, on the contrary, generally deeply engaged in some different entertainment with others of the party.

Thus matters wore on, when one hopelessly wet day set the whole party at their wits' ends to devise some agreeable mode of getting through it. The usual resources of a country-house were tried; but as the season, on the whole, had been a wet one, none of these retained the charm of novelty; they were therefore soon cast aside, and as the party was a social and well-selected one, the anxiety became general to strike out some amusement which should engage them all, and not suffer

the gentlemen to pair off to the billiard-room, or chess and backgammon tables.

At last some one suggested that every gentleman should repair to the conservatory, and choosing some flower there, present it, with an appropriate original inscription, written with a pencil on a band of white ribbon, to the lady of his choice, which she in return was bound to wear at dinner, the flower in her hair, the band of ribbon as a bracelet on her arm. To this there were at first some dissenting voices; but when a few amendments had been adopted, it was finally carried. One of the amendments was, that, in order to spare the gentlemen all gentle confusion, the addresses should be written in feigned hands and presented anonymously; and in order to avoid all chance of detection, a basket was to be left in the conservatory, into which they were to be promiscuously thrown, and from whence Lady Seaton's maid was to take and distribute them according to their different directions, whilst the ladies dressed for dinner.

It is necessary that a young, gay, and idle party should be hopelessly shut up by bad weather in a country-house, where they had assembled for amusement, in order to understand the avidity with which this little scheme was now hailed, and the merriment excited by the sombre countenances of the gentlemen, as, seated at the various tables in the drawing-room, they endeavoured to conjure verses out of their brains, by the very dint, it would seem, of frowns and contortions.

It was simultaneously voted and agreed that the ladies should retire, as their unfeeling mirth only served to distract them more. This, after all, was no unacceptable decree; for not only is laughing long at the same thing tiresome in itself, but the humid atmosphere had weighed so heavily on their silken tresses, as to warn them by many a *touching appeal to their eyes*, that it would require more time than usual, to put them into a state worthy the blushing honours that were preparing for them with so much labour; and, indeed, one or two had already

slyly slipped away, after a stolen glance at a mirror, to see how her face bore the careless pushing of her drooping ringlets behind her ears. A careless toilette reads well, but somehow few can bear it.

A very few minutes after the ladies had retired, the Duke of Castleton left his seat, and went over to the table where Vandeleur sat a little apart, engaged, pen in hand, like the rest ; but not like the rest, taking fresh ink into his pen between every extorted word, as if the genius lay in the ink itself: on the contrary, having undertaken to write a couplet, his pen flowed on with a facility in which he had not indulged since the days of his boyhood.

“Come, Vandeleur,” said the duke, “be charitable. I never wrote a line of poetry in all my life, and I see they drop from your pen even without an effort. Do, like a good fellow, write a couplet for me. Why, bless me ! you have already enough there to serve a dozen. You cannot cram all those upon a bracelet ;

it must be a *sash*, and that you cannot present to a lady: so, do be generous, and give me a stanza or two out of these—those you reject will do for me.”

“ But suppose, my lord, they will only suit one object ?”

“ Then are they no love verses ; for the feeling is all that is ever described when we think we are describing the individual, and that is alike in all. Did you ever show lines upon love to any lady in your life who did not in some way betray that she thought them particularly applicable to herself? just as natural characters in a novel are said to be personal. Upon my soul, I once knew a girl who answered lines she read in a newspaper, under the firm persuasion that her lover or beloved had adopted that mode of communicating his feelings ; they were, she said, so exactly applicable, though he was not only in India at the time, but had never written two lines of verse in his life. Some one, to humour the joke, replied to hers ; and, the sentiments being



still his, she appointed a meeting, and ultimately, to save her character, became the wretched wife of a talented shoemaker ! But come," he added in a low voice, and with a slight degree of hesitation, " I don't care if I tell you, that I think it but right to present *my* offering to Lady Seaton : will your verses at all apply to *her* ?"

" You may judge for yourself, my lord. You may have these lines, and if you can pick out any that suit you, you are welcome to them ; only remember your own principle, that the feeling is alike *in* all and *to* all." And so saying, he handed to the duke the following lines, and left the room.

Oh, pardon that thou hearest from me  
The wailings of a hopeless flame ;  
Henceforth I shall not be to thee  
An object of thy praise or blame.  
Then do not deem each mournful line  
A vain attempt thy breast to move ;  
I would but soothe the pain of mine,  
By murmuring—how much I love !  
I would but bid a last farewell,  
To one, though late, too dearly known,  
Ere I take up my staff and shell  
To wander through the world alone.



Thou wert to me a lovely star,  
The empress of my wayward will,  
And though too high, too bright, too far  
For me to hope, I loved thee still.  
I did not *hope*—yet had a dream  
That fame might make me worthy thee ;  
And then, how proudly did I deem  
No task too high, too hard for me !  
That star I worshipp'd as my guide,  
I own'd no other guide but thee ;  
I follow'd—but thou didst abide  
Above no Bethlehem for me !

As soon as the company began to assemble in the drawing-room before dinner, a judge was appointed, who, seated in all the dignity of a music-stool, was to have the privilege of taking each fair lady by the hand, reading aloud the inscription which its ribbon bore, and pronouncing judgment as to how far the lines suited the flower selected. Of their *originality* all doubt vanished according as they appeared !

Lady Augusta Starling entered the room first, her auburn curls bound with a wreath of roses, and on her wrist she bore the following lines :

Fair Rose ! since not Apollo's lyre could now  
Give one new strain in which thy praise to speak,  
Go twine thyself on fair Augusta's brow,  
And guess thy beauty from her blushing cheek.

“ Why, this is an address to the rose, and not to the lady !” said Lord Hampton, who was appointed judge, as retributive justice for his having pleaded the ‘ Easter holidays,’ in the forenoon, as an exemption for himself, and one or two other “ steady senators,” from all extra exercise of the brains.

“ Oh, never mind,” exclaimed Lady Augusta ;  
“ trust me, there is no sweeter compliment than that paid through a rival beauty.”

Another fair creature entered. She held a blue hyacinth in her hand ; she wore on her arm its application :

Thrice happy flower ! the Lily or the Rose  
May each one emblematic grace disclose ;  
Whilst thou dost two of Emma's charms declare —  
Her eyes of blue, and *hyacinthine* hair.

“ Humph ! I did not know that puns were admitted.”

“ Oh yes, when they are superadded gratis.”

“ Very well ; pass on.”

A third came, with a bunch of lily-of-the-valley.

Fair *belle*, though here no humble valley smiles,  
Thy native sweetness still our hearts beguiles ; —  
Like her who, nurtured in the highest sphere,  
Boasts all that makes the cottage maiden dear.

“ And what may that be ? for in all my long life I never yet could find out that a cottage maiden was *better* than a *pis-aller*.”

“ Hold ! hold !” exclaimed two or three together ; “ a forfeit ! Lord Hampton is invading our privileges, and punning.”

“ I think it was much more like an Irish bull : however, if you choose to ‘ make the *worse* appear the *better* reason,’ I’m sure I have no objection, and will at any time gladly pay a forfeit for a witticism——of my own ! But about this pretty young lady who, in my mind, has been so injuriously compared to a cottage maid ?”

“ Oh, you inexorable judge ! of course it only means artlessness and simplicity, and so forth.”

“Heigh-ho ! I do wish people would learn to distinguish between simplicity and ignorance, vulgarity and artlessness. But pass on, fair girl ; you are in no danger of confounding them. Hah !—what have we here ? A new species of geranium, which I have never seen before. Will the motto tell its name ?”

Blushing and beautiful, the charming girl who wore it, held up her arm. She was the affianced bride of a young nobleman, whom some accidental circumstance prevented from being of the party at the moment ; but as the circumstance of their betrothment was no longer a secret, some one had in his absence selected the species of geranium then recently obtained, and called by his name, and addressed it to the lady with these lines :

The time is past to sing thy beauties o'er ;  
These let them sing whose fate denies them more.  
But let this flower my fondest hopes combine ;  
It bears my name—my Laura, make it thine !

The judge was touched with the graceful good humour, and good breeding, of the lovely

*fiancée*, and respectfully raising her hand to his lips, he handed her on without uttering an observation.

One or two more succeeded, and then there was a pause—a pause for the mistress of the revels. Presently she entered, but with a countenance whose flushed colour, and bashful expression, but ill accorded with the laughing hilarity of the moment, wherein each fair lady was expected to receive her offering as a mere *jeu d'esprit*, and not at all *dal cuore*.

Lady Seaton looked particularly lovely, and it was perceived that her fair ringlets were closely enwreathed with—the dark passion-flower. She hesitated to advance to her father, and one or two of her young companions impatiently seized her hands, as if expecting to find in the charmed motto the secret of her surpassing beauty. If so, they were driven to despair; for there was neither verse nor motto, and she wore the white band pure and unsullied.

“How’s this! how is this?” exclaimed the

judge, to whom she was now handed up. “A forfeit ! a forfeit from Lady Seaton !”

“I was not aware, my lord judge,” she said, “that we were liable to be fined for the want of taste of others, in not deeming us worthy of an address : methinks the slight is in itself punishment enough.”

“Nay, fair lady, that humble apology will not serve your turn : he who presented you with that expressive emblem of *crossed*\* love never deemed you unworthy of a verse.

“But,” exclaimed Lady Augusta Starling, “may it not be the other way—the other way? May he not have deemed her above all common modes of communication, and left that melancholy flower to tell its own tale, on the principle that—

‘ Silence in love betrays more woe  
Than words, tho’ e’er so witty ;  
As beggars that are dumb, you know,  
May challenge double pity.’

\* It is scarcely necessary to remind the reader that the passion-flower is marked with a cross, from whence it is said to take its name.



Indeed, if he had had his wits about him, he would have given in these lines with the flower, to explain his silence."

"If he had been an Irishman, I dare say he might," said Lady Seaton.

"Yes, yes, but all these ifs, mights, and perhaphses will not do," interposed the judge ; "we must have Lady Seaton's forfeit, or some good reason against it."

"Ask her," said the Duke of Castleton, "if she received no other flower with an address ; and if so, why she declined to wear it."

"Is it as a forfeit, my lord ?" she said, turning to him with a slight blush, "that you would compel me to hurt the vanity of some well-meaning swain, who fancied he was paying me a compliment, by forcing me to tell him how unacceptable it was ?"

"I am answered, and rebuked," said the duke, with a greater appearance of mortification than the matter seemed to call for : so much, indeed, that Lady Augusta whispered in his

ear, "I think, my lord, that amounted to '*a contempt of court*'—Need I finish the word?"

"Come, duke," said Lord Hampton with a smile, "come; as this ill-omened flower has not only defrauded Lady Seaton of an expected *address*, but almost deprived her of *her own*, we must only take for granted that she wears it as emblematic of *passion* indeed, but of a kind the very reverse of that it was meant to express. And now, good people, 'to dinner with what appetites we may.'"

It was utterly impossible that Lord Hampton could have formed the most distant guess at who, amongst so many, might have presented the passion-flower to Lady Seaton. She was aware of this, and could therefore only attribute to one cause, the slight degree of annoyance that to her, if to no one else, was perfectly visible under the smile which he had assumed in uttering these words. This conviction did not tend to restore her composure, and threw an unconscious gloom over the whole procedure, which made every one feel it had gone far enough.

Under this impression, the subject was only once again alluded to, and that was by the duke himself, who, as he sat next to Lady Seaton at dinner, literally seemed unable to detach his eyes from the dark wreath which certainly did contrast most beautifully with her blonde complexion and hair. "Well, I envy, but cannot guess, who selected that flower," he said. "I can make some guess at nearly all the others, but not the least at the silent swain whose offering is so honoured; and the worst of the matter is, that, upon my soul!" he said, laughing, "I tried to get at that flower myself, but it was so deuced high I could not reach it. *He* must be a tall fellow."

Lady Seaton instantly repeated, as it were musingly, but quite distinctly, the line,

"Fain would I climb, but fear to fall."

"Yes! finish the couplet, as Queen Elizabeth did," exclaimed the duke.

"Why, my lord? it could not in the least apply to *you*, you know."

And it did not: but there was one brown

cheek opposite to her at dinner which became deadly pale when he caught the line. A glass of sherry however, hastily swallowed, set all to rights, and his emotion passed off undiscovered.

When the time came for Lord Hampton and his family to return to London, Vandeleur at once determined within himself to spare Lady Seaton the ungracious task (should she again deem it a necessary one) of withdrawing from him the intimacy with which she had honoured him in the country. Accordingly, for some time his visits were much less frequent than might have been expected. Lord Hampton remarked it; and once more, with an expressive smile, hoped he was employing his leave of absence to some advantage.

Vandeleur looked graver than when last the hint was conveyed, and his eye sought not Lady Seaton's this time; it would not have met it if it had: but his mother, who was present at the moment, suffered hers to glance furtively, and anxiously, from one to the other.

That lady had for some days past manifested a dejection of spirits, and a sort of dissatisfied manner, very unlike her usual placidity, and dignified deportment. On the evening before this observation of Lord Hampton's, Lady Seaton, finding her sitting apparently in deep and unpleasing meditation, in a saloon formerly appropriated to their studies, took a seat beside her, and kindly taking her hand, inquired what had occurred to annoy her.

Mrs. Vandeleur instantly replied, "I scarcely know if I ought to trouble you with it, my love ; but there is a matter which causes me a good deal of anxiety."

"My dear Mrs. Vandeleur, is it any matter in which my father or I can assist you?"

"No, dearest Lady Seaton, it is not : it merely relates to Godfrey's marriage : " and she raised her eyes to her pupil's face.

It was instantly dyed with a deep and burning blush. As rapid blushes were, however, an essential part of Lady Seaton's beauty, it might,



she hoped, betoken nothing more than surprise ; and the paleness which certainly succeeded she was willing to attribute to the mere reaction of the eloquent blood. As Lady Seaton seemed not about to make any observation, Mrs. Vandeleur continued : “ A near relative of my late husband, a man of much respectability, and even immense wealth, acquired in mercantile pursuits, has taken an uncommon fancy to Godfrey, and has had him a great deal at his house. One of his daughters, a very pretty pleasing girl,—and, I assure you, Lady Seaton, lady-like and accomplished,—has beheld him with still more partial eyes. She is her father’s favourite child ; and, in short, such overtures have been made to him, chiefly through me, as might be acceptable to a nobleman. They satisfy their own feelings in all this, by affecting to think that his want of fortune may deter him from coming forward, and yet render so very large a one as they offer, necessary to him. But, I lament to say, he will not even hear me on the subject.”



Another rapid blush, but without the succeeding paleness, was the only answer Mrs. Vandeleur still received from her attentive pupil. She therefore continued: "It is a matter of great regret to me; because, besides the young lady herself being really everything I could wish, and even, as I said before, remarkably pretty, the noble fortune which her father is willing to settle on her, would place Godfrey at once far beyond anything he can ever look to, after his life spent in his profession, be his success what it may."

She paused; and Lady Seaton at last said, (but, Mrs. Vandeleur could not help fancying, with a slight degree of timidity very unusual to her,) "And does he assign no reason for his obduracy?"

Her eyes were not cast down when she uttered the words, still less were they fixed upon her governess's countenance, but wandered with constrained indifference, as did her fingers, over the chords of a little musical toy which lay on the table beside her.

“ No, none,” Mrs. Vandeleur answered ;  
“ except the usual reply on such occasions, of  
general disinclination to marriage, and devotion  
to his profession. I trust the life he is now  
leading may not wholly unfit him for that he is  
likely to lead in future.”

“ And what is that ?”

“ That of an unfortunèd soldier in country  
quarters.”

A silence of some minutes succeeded. At  
last Lady Seaton said, with all her usual grace  
and self-possession, “ It is not indeed a case, I  
fear, in which we can give you any assistance ;  
and therefore, dear Mrs. Vandeleur, I shall bid  
you good night ;” and she accordingly with-  
drew.

The Duke of Castleton had returned to Lon-  
don a day or two before the Hamptons did,  
and was received into the gay vortex there  
with all the avidity that one of his high rank,  
splendid fortune, courtly manners, and really  
gentle and amiable temper, deserved. He

bowed, and smiled, and danced, as fancy or propriety dictated, amongst his numerous acquaintances ; but, alas ! it was very soon perceived that, even while he smiled on one, his eyes were wandering round the crowded room in search of another form ; that form was Lady Seaton's.

What is it that makes men and women love those most who least resemble themselves ?—It is a wise decree of Providence, that the balance of good and evil should be fairly adjusted.

Young ladies, as soon as this predilection on the duke's part was discovered, gave up all hopes ; for few, even in their own estimation, could hope to rival Lady Seaton. But not so their wiser mothers : they peeped farther behind the scenes, and plainly perceived that Lady Seaton was as indifferent to the duke, as the duke was enamoured of her.

“ It will never be a match,” said the Dowager Marchioness of L., who had three fair daughters in the room at the time, and whom,

they being exactly the same height and remarkably like each other, she had taken the desperate step of bringing out together, on the speculation of their being called ‘the Graces.’ “It will never be a match, my dear madam: I know Lady Seaton’s independent temper too well.”

“Yes, but *I* know her father’s, from whom she derives it; and, believe me, he will carry his point, though in all courtesy,” replied the young Countess of S., whose daughters were yet all children.

“But the man can never propose; she treats him so haughtily.”

“Never mind; he knows what he is about: he is gentle, and has never ventured to say anything to her to induce a refusal; and he will take advantage of that, and will apply to her father.”

It was even so. It might have been about a month after Lord Hampton returned to London, that he one morning requested his daughter to give him an audience in the library.

She of course immediately complied, and he there informed her of the proposals of the Duke of Castleton. He waited some moments for her reply. “ Well, Theodosia ?” he said at last.

“ Well, my dear father, to decline them, of course.”

“ On what plea, Theodosia ?”

“ On what plea, father !—rather, on what plea should I accept them ?”

It is needless to go over Lord Hampton’s answer, and all that ensued in enumeration of the advantages of the alliance. It is enough to say, that Lady Seaton was for the first time afraid to examine her own heart. To her father she offered the excuse of utter indifference.

“ This cannot, or at least ought not to induce you to refuse him time to endeavour to remove that indifference, Theodosia,” the marquis answered. “ You know that I have never pressed you upon this subject of marriage, and therefore——”

She earnestly interrupted him — “ And therefore do not do away now with your former indulgence, my dear, dear father : let me continue happy with you ! ” and she knelt before him.

“ This, Theodosia,” said the marquis, attempting to raise her, “ is acting like a boarding-school citizen, or the heroine of some low-lived novel.”

Lady Seaton instantly rose, and stood respectfully, but with an air of almost offended dignity, before him.

“ I beg your pardon, Theodosia,” he added, “ but I am really surprised and disappointed.— You will at least permit the duke’s attentions as usual ? ”

“ *As usual* I will, sir ; but that, you must be aware, will be with marked disapprobation.”

Lord Hampton rose and left the room, as if afraid to trust himself with a further reply. Lady Seaton sank into a chair the moment he disappeared, and remained there in no enviable state of mind, until Mrs. Vandeleur entered in



search of a book. In a moment she was struck with the abstraction and depression of Lady Seaton's air, so very unusual to her.

“ My dearest Lady Seaton, what is the matter ?” she asked in unfeigned alarm, and knelt down before her in her anxiety, in order to look into her face, which was supported between her hands, while her elbows rested on the arms of her chair. Without changing her position, Lady Seaton turned her eyes on her governess for a moment, as if hesitating how to reply to her ; when suddenly, as if she read in her anxious face all the sympathy she sought for, she threw herself upon her neck and whispered, “ The duke has proposed to my father.”

Mrs. Vandeleur folded her closer in her arms, and at the moment mistaking the cause of her emotion, warmly exclaimed, “ From my heart I congratulate you, my dearest child !”

She was soon made aware of her error : Lady Seaton no sooner heard the exclamation, than, disengaging herself coldly, but hastily from her

arms, she pushed her from her with the nearest approach to anger she had ever exhibited, and left the room without uttering another word.

Mrs. Vandeleur remained as it were paralysed for a few minutes ; but fully aware that something more than common must have happened to affect her temper and spirits thus, she hastened after her to her dressing-room. There, to her surprise, she found her engaged with her women preparing to go out to ride. Mrs. Vandeleur paused a moment, hoping that she might dismiss them ; but soon perceiving that such was not her intention—indeed that she even studiously, as she thought, avoided doing so, she quietly approached the dressing-table, and waited there until the toilette was completed. Still she was disappointed ; for Lady Seaton no sooner found herself freed from their officious hands, than she turned hastily to her governess, and whispering, “Forgive me, dearest Mrs. Vandeleur, I was very naughty,” touched her cheek

with hers, and flew down stairs as if her life depended on her not losing a moment. Even that passing touch, however, was sufficient to convince her maternal friend that her cheek was flushed and feverish.

“ I see some one galloping after us very fast in the distance,” said Captain Vandeleur, with a faint but expressive smile, as he rode up with some trifling commission to Lady Seaton’s side.

“ Who is it ?” she asked hastily.

“ Why, no *eyes* could tell at this distance ; but fortunately we have perceptions independent of our outward organs, and mine tell me it is the Duke of Castleton.”

“ Your perceptions must be keen ;—are they so on all occasions ?”

“ Why, I rather think you hit me fairly, for falling into the common error of calling deductions perceptions. Though I certainly could not distinguish the duke’s person, I am satisfied that it was his hurried pace made me guess

that it must be he ; and now I can see by less equivocal signs that I was right,—it is his noble self. I fall back to my place, to deliver your answer to my message.”

“ It requires no answer, does it ? At least, I think I gave none.”

“ But will you not ?”

“ I shall consider.”

“ Nay, this is tyranny,” said he, laughing, “ not to allow me to cover my retreat under this form.”

“ Why must you retreat at all ?”

“ Nay, if you do not command me—” he said, looking at her with some astonishment ; but then recollecting himself, he added : “ But no—I will not abuse your kindness and good-nature ; I shall not usurp this coveted place.”

“ Certainly not, if you do not wish to retain it,” she said more seriously ; but at the same time averting her head with a degree of consciousness which gave double force to her expressions.

The young man paused a moment in anxious doubt; then, in a low emphatic voice he repeated, "If I do not wish it! O God! enable me never to listen to the dictates of my wishes!"

"They must surely then be something very criminal," she said hurriedly, and putting her horse into a light canter as she spoke, while he was under the necessity of keeping at her side to catch her words.

"No," he answered, "my prayer was not as religiously meant as you interpret it; I rather prayed to be saved from sorrow than from sin."

"You are abstruse this morning. I confess I see not how following the dictates of your wishes could tend to your unhappiness, except through sin."

"I spoke not of following my wishes, Lady Seaton; that rests not with me. I spoke of presuming to allow my own heart to commune with itself, and even learn what they may be;

lest, like Narcissus of old, it should grow enamoured of its own *reflection*, and die in despair."

He tried to smile and give an air of playfulness to the latter part of his speech; but it would not do. The tone of truth and deep feeling could not be disguised. Lady Seaton remained silent for a moment, with her head still rather averted, until Vandeleur said,

"Lady Seaton, the duke has fallen into our rear; he is just exchanging compliments there previous to joining you. Tell me seriously if you wish me to prevent his obtaining this place at your side."

"Seriously, then, *I do*. I am really at a loss," she said quickly, after a moment's hesitation, "to account for Captain Vandeleur's anxiety to forward the Duke of Castleton's views or wishes in little matters where gentlemen are generally allowed, and indeed generally prefer," (she added a little contemptuously,) "trusting to their own powers."



“ I am at a loss to understand you.”

“ Oh, why writing love-sonnets for them ; making way for them to get near particular persons, &c. &c. Has my father given you commission to this effect ? or does Captain Vandeleur think that he alone has magnanimity enough to disregard worldly advantages ?”

The unfortunate young man to whom this speech was addressed, was thrown into the utmost agitation—we had almost said consternation, by it. Through a good deal of bitterness of feeling, and some hauteur of manner, he could not but perceive the blushing cheek, and hurried palpitating breathing. Spouting hackneyed sentiment was a style of conversation which he was well aware the refined, and high-bred countess, at all times held in the utmost horror, contempt, and disgust, and he therefore felt, through every nerve, that something awful to his fate was impending. As far, however, as the matter had yet gone, he could only affect to receive it as a sort of badinage. Ac-

cordingly, he answered, though still very unsuccessful in his attempts, " I assure you I never wrote any sonnets for the Duke of Castleton. When we were all condemned to try to drown rain in ink, I, like the rest, scribbled some lines, which the duke, without knowing what they contained, begged from me ; and as they were not worth refusing, I gave them."

" And had you time to compose others ? You must be very clever."

Vandeleur turned his eyes on her ; but hers were again carefully averted.

" No," he said ; " and I was not sorry to be spared saying what I could not have said lightly, and yet not seriously without impertinence : I was fain to take shelter under a flower."

" *Fain*—that is a quaint old mode of expression."

He turned to her again, to see if she wished to remind him of the line she had muttered that day ; but her manner appeared unembarrassed,

and she added, "It must have been a very high flower to have sheltered you."

"It was ; but as *I feared not to climb* any height for the purpose for which I wanted it, I gained it. However, just as I attempted to go one step farther to obtain another, the ladder gave way, and I was precipitated from my giddy height.—But how did you know those lines were mine?"

"By *perception*, as you said to me just now. I knew they could not be the duke's; and I also knew that no one else of the party would have been so charitable to him, or perhaps could have afforded it."

"Well, poor man!" said Vandeleur with a slight smile, "I am making him pay dearly now, for having assisted him then. Observe how he keeps aloof, until I shall have the tact to resign in his favour. Well, if I am to become a dragon to scare off knights errant, I must only endeavour to do my *devoir* manfully."

There is a state of feeling—luckily it is a rare one—in which the slightest jest, or light allusion to the subject that at the moment is affecting one, falls like molten lead upon the nerves. Lady Seaton was, for the first time of her life, in this state of feeling.

“ Oh, pray do not invest yourself with any such unamiable character,” she said. “ If that is the only one in which you can consent to keep this place; I am aware that I have no right over Captain Vandeleur’s duty or allegiance.”

“ Yet have you command over every feeling or sentiment he possesses,” replied the young man, without farther hesitation, and in the most emphatic manner; “ and his only anxiety is how to render them subservient to your slightest wish, in the least obtrusive, least offensive form.”

Lady Seaton, like all persons whose feelings either of mirth, or anguish, have hurried them farther than they could foresee the consequences of, was now startled at the sudden and serious

change in Vandeleur's voice and manner ; yet, such is the waywardness of the heart if once listened to, that, in spite of all her efforts to look and feel calm and dignified, she only felt soothed and softened, and large and silent tears fell glittering upon her dark riding-dress.

Nothing, as may be supposed, could exceed the agitation, the alarm, the bewilderment into which Vandeleur was thrown at this unwonted sight. While he hesitated in an agony of uncertainty whether he had better seem to notice her emotion or not, he perceived that the Duke of Castleton, become hopeless of his withdrawing, was now making his escape from the rest of the party, and just preparing to ride forward to address Lady Seaton. As this, he was aware, could not fail to be most unpleasant to her at this moment, he drew close up to her, and laying his hand on her bridle-rein, said in a tone of voice in which tenderness, anxiety, and haste contended for mastery—

“ Dearest Lady Seaton, bear with me for a



moment. The Duke of Castleton is just coming up to speak to you : if you would not that he saw you just now, let us gallop forward and turn off the high road until you are better."

" I cannot, I cannot !" she sobbed forth almost in a passion of tears ; " I really am unable : besides, it would look too marked, too ridiculous."

The duke galloped up.

" Lady Seaton is not well," said Captain Vandeleur, (while she pressed her handkerchief to her face and stifled her sobs,) — " and as she is anxious not to alarm and break up the riding-party, I want her to turn down this sort of avenue just before us, until she recovers, and then either return home or follow them."

The presence of a third person, especially when that person was the dreaded duke, partly removed Lady Seaton's objections to this proposal ; and as she felt really unequal to proceeding, she suffered the gentlemen to turn her horse down one of those beautiful green lanes, so



frequent in England, and of which one or two still remained at that time even in the neighbourhood of London. Here an abrupt turn, and the thick foliage of early summer, caused them in a few moments to be completely lost sight of from the road. They dipped Lady Seaton's handkerchief in a rivulet that ran close by ; and as she applied it to her eyes and temples, she said, " I am better now ; and if I could get a message conveyed to Lady Augusta Starling, she would manage to leave the party without breaking it up, and would, I know, accompany me home."

The duke, with lover-like alertness, undertook the office of messenger, — for such had been the guarded propriety of Vandeleur's bearing towards Lady Seaton upon all occasions, that not even the jaundiced eye of jealousy had found any exercise through him.

The moment the duke was out of sight, Vandeleur approached Lady Seaton, and although fearfully apprehensive of appearing impertinent-

ly intrusive, felt it impossible to resist inquiring the cause of her emotion, to which, strange as it might be, it certainly appeared that he had contributed, if not entirely occasioned. Under this impression, he said: “ Can you acquit me of impertinence, Lady Seaton, if I venture to inquire if anything I have said has offended you? Believe me, at least, that it should not be so: mine is rather the dumb and disinterested devotion of the dog, than the presumptuous——” He hesitated to pronounce the word *love*; and leaving the sentence unfinished, he went on to say, “ But this it cannot be; this you are too well accustomed to, though not perhaps either in kind or in degree, to be offended at it.—But this is transgressing: I would only ask if there is anything in my power to do—any sacrifice of life or limb that I can make,—in short, Lady Seaton, I would ask if the time is come when *my* highest ambition shall be crowned by serving or assisting *you* ?”

There was something so gentle, so devoted,

yet so manly and so upright, in this expression of attachment, that Lady Seaton's tears, agitated as her spirits were, flowed afresh; and as Captain Vandeleur approached her in alarm, she suffered her hand to rest upon his shoulder. He shuddered beneath its gentle pressure; and, after standing for a moment as if transfixed, he gently withdrew himself, and moved to a greater distance. At that moment the duke appeared with Lady Augusta Starling; and Lady Seaton, making a violent effort over herself, was able to answer the inquiries, and expressions of alarm and regret, which were showered upon her, with tolerable calmness. They proceeded homewards without delay; and as soon as they arrived, Lady Seaton, pleading indisposition, retired for the evening to her dressing-room.

## CHAPTER VII.

And what, oh ! what is this to the pain  
Of chilling young Love's first blush,  
And with steady hand, ere yet 'tis in vain,  
Its first sweet blossoms to crush !

Yet shrink, oh ! shrink not from this, ye to whom  
The ungenial task may be given ;  
For the love thus embalm'd in its first pure bloom  
May blossom again in Heaven !

ANONYMOUS.

LADY SEATON had not been many minutes alone, when Mrs. Vandeleur, hearing of her sudden return, hastened with anxiety to inquire the cause of it; and never, in the course of that lady's long and watchful guardianship, had she been on any occasion so thoroughly alarmed as now, at the state in which she found her beloved pupil, in this her first hour of unhappiness.

On her knees, beside the couch on which Lady Seaton lay in gloomy silence, she implored of her to unburthen her mind, and conjured her to remember that she was addressing her most anxious friend, and one who was an indulgent mother.

“ Ah ! but not of daughters,” said Lady Seaton with some degree of bitterness : “ and what is noble and dignified in man, is considered weak and unbecoming in woman.”

“ It is rarely the case,” said Mrs. Vandeleur, “ to that extent ; and if you would but intrust me with the cause of your present distress, perhaps we should find that this is not one where their principles are at variance.”

“ Be it so, then,” said Lady Seaton ; and suddenly raising herself on the couch, “ The case is simply this : that—your son and I agree too well in our sentiments and ideas concerning love and marriage ! ”

How little have words to do in communicating the thoughts and feelings of the heart !

Such a sentence, uttered in common conversation or in ordinary circumstances, might have conveyed nothing more than an abstract coincidence of opinion, founded on reason, between two persons, and might have existed between two ladies : but, preceded and accompanied by the unwonted emotion of Lady Seaton, as it was in the present instance, poor Mrs. Vandeleur, whose fears had been already vaguely excited on the subject of her son's and her pupil's mutual regard,—though none but a mother's eye could have detected it,—interpreted Lady Seaton's confession according to her fears ; and releasing the hand which she had hitherto held between hers, she pressed both hers upon her own brow, and exclaimed, “ Then my worst fears are true ! my prayers have been in vain ! ”

Lady Seaton raised herself upon her elbow to gaze upon her. “ What prayers ?—in Heaven's name, what prayers ?—what can you or do you mean ? ”

The governess pressed her forehead against



Lady Seaton's arm, and, throwing her own around her waist, she exclaimed, "Theodosia ! countess ! child of my affections and of my cares ! know, that what you have just told me afflicts, but does not surprise me. My unfortunate son's infatuation I have for some time suspected, and your gentle appreciation of what a mother may be allowed to call his merits, I have sometimes feared ; but, God knows how little I ever thought it would come to this !" And she bowed her head still lower against the sofa, though she pressed Lady Seaton still more fondly.

"And may I ask the cause of this overwhelming affliction at the discovery ?" asked Lady Seaton, rather submitting to, than returning, her embrace.

"The cause !—can you indeed ask me the cause ? See you not the misery, the ingratitude, the disgrace that it involves ?"

"I confess myself not so clear-sighted. Disgrace, misery, and ingratitude to whom ?"

“Disgrace to you, my love, my child, my darling!—ingratitude to your father and his family!—and, oh! Countess of Seaton, misery to us all!” She wept bitterly.

Lady Seaton’s good sense, and kind heart, were touched by her distress. She wound her arms round her neck; and, hiding her face in her bosom, she gave to the tried friend of her life the particulars of what had passed that day.

When she had finished, Mrs. Vandeleur, who had risen and seated herself beside her on the sofa, again sank upon her knees, and bowing her head and clasping her hands, exclaimed, “I thank thee, I thank thee, O gracious Lord! Godfrey my son is still upright and noble; and you, my equally beloved child, are still unfettered, uncompromised.”

“You are certainly, at all events, a most disinterested mother,” observed Lady Seaton, again a little struck by the fervour of her thanksgiving, as it were, at her son’s escape.

“I trust I am, where your happiness or respectability is concerned : you saw it otherwise with me in the case of my young relative. But retire now to your chamber, my dearest love. Admit me in the morning, and I will give you in full my ideas upon this subject ; and if I fail to convince your reason, remember, I am still Godfrey’s mother, and your devoted friend.”

So saying, she rose to ring for Lady Seaton’s attendants ; but the latter conjured her to say whatever she wished upon the subject at once, and assured her it would contribute more to her repose.

“I only can judge of that, my child,” replied Mrs. Vandeleur ; “and do you give me now an example of that command of mind which I have endeavoured to ensure to you, but which you have never been called upon to exercise before. Dismiss the matter from your mind for this night, as you are aware that you are not in a state to view it dispassionately ; and to-morrow morning, believe me, you shall be

the arbitress of your own fate !” Soothed, comforted, and supported by remonstrances at once kind and judicious, Lady Seaton yielded ; and only detaining Mrs. Vandeleur until her spirits became more composed, she retired for the night.

It was considerably past her usual hour when Lady Seaton entered her dressing-room the following morning. She had ordered breakfast there for herself and Mrs. Vandeleur, and accordingly, on her entrance, she found that lady anxiously awaiting her. The moment she appeared, Mrs. Vandeleur threw aside the book she had been reading, and leading her at once to the breakfast-table, touched, without affectation or apparent effort, upon the various indifferent little topics which usually furnish breakfast conversation : but no sooner was the breakfast-table removed, than, anxious to relieve the mind of her beloved pupil from the suspense and inquietude which she knew were preying upon it, she gently took her hand, which

trembled within hers, and leading her to the sofa, adverted at once to the subject that was unfinished when they parted the evening before. Lady Seaton's pale cheek assumed even more than its usual brilliant hue when she began; but it was only for a moment; and she prepared herself to attend with calmness and composure.

“ My dearest child,” said Mrs. Vandeleur, placing her arm tenderly round her waist, “ I will not keep you in suspense respecting sentiments which I promised last night to express to you, and which, were it only from their subject, must naturally be interesting to you; but which, I know, will likewise have a merit in your eyes from being mine. Listen to me, then, with patience; but fail not to interrupt me if there are any to which your reason does not assent. That is all I seek to gain over to my cause; for, to your heart, against *it*, I know you would never listen. In the first place, then, I would protest decidedly against the maxim, so common amongst



young people, that it is tyranny in their parents or family to control their wishes on the subject of marriage, on the plea of its being a matter which only concerns themselves. In any rank of society I deny this to be the case; but the higher the rank in life, the more decidedly it is the contrary. Every member of a family is, in my opinion, bound by moral links to contribute his or her share of happiness to the general stock, and has *no right* to destroy it for the gratification of their individual self, still less for that of a stranger. This, however, like everything else, has its limits, of course. Happiness, I believe, was originally intended by an all-wise Providence to be pretty equally diffused; and whether it was by his institutions, or by those of man, that some are rich and some are poor, I will not now inquire: it is enough for our purpose to know that the advantages of the rich are clogged by duties and restraints from which the poor man is free, and thereby in some degree compensated for the want of them.



There is no one, I believe, who in the abstract will deny, that whoever accepts the advantages of any situation, tacitly binds himself, unless by previous stipulation, to conform to its conditions. My study with you has ever been, that you should shrink from nothing—*nothing* in practice, which you admit in theory. I believe the neglect of this to be one of the fundamental errors of human nature—the open and declared war, as it were, between the spirit and the flesh; for “the spirit indeed is willing, but the flesh is weak.” The gamester, the drunkard, the debauchee—ay, even the scoffer, I could pardon and excuse, while their minds were so darkened that they saw not the error of their ways: but I always turned with a kind of loathing despair from those who exclaim, ‘I know it is very wrong, but I cannot help it.’ You tell me that you did not—perhaps do not believe your feelings to have been wrong. I do not doubt it, my child: but, as I hope to convince you that they are so, like a cunning arguer I am

trying to cheat you into an admission before you are aware of the consequences it involves. However, both my case and my judge are, I believe, too good to require that management ; so I shall proceed at once to the duties of your station. Of your individual duty to your only parent, I will not speak ; because you might answer me, that if he should be induced to act tyrannically, your duty to obey him ceases : it is my part, then, to endeavour to prove to you, that in withholding his consent from a disproportioned marriage, or even in strongly urging the advantages of another, he does *not* act tyrannically, or in any manner inconsistently with his duty towards you. I said, we each had duties according to our different stations : yours happens to be invested with rank, connexions, and influential wealth ; therefore your marriage is a matter of serious importance to many besides yourself : and tell me, are you justifiable in setting aside their claims for any selfish consideration ? Perhaps you will say that the happiness

of a dearer self is at stake ; but I appeal to yourself again if this is not the most dangerous kind of selfishness under the disguise of generosity. Ask yourself, if that object, however worthy and deserving, happened to be one who excited some unaccountable antipathy in you, whether from any consideration for his happiness, or if even to save him from destruction or death, you could be induced to stoop from your high station to become his wife?—or whether you would not consider any one a presumptuous fool who should propose the unreasonable sacrifice? There may be cases in which all I have been saying may, and ought to be set aside ; but such cases are rare, and are rather to be avoided as exceptions, than brought forward as precedents. Of the unhappiness likely—indeed certain—to ensue to yourselves, I will not speak—because that is beyond the reach of any young imagination to conceive while under the opposite delusion.”

Here Lady Seaton interrupted her for the

first time. “ Indeed you do me less than justice there !” she exclaimed. “ I believe I should not have been happy if—under all the circumstances,—in short, it was a thing which I considered as impossible as he did, until—until—perhaps for one moment yesterday—and then—it certainly was a strange moment—a sort of era in my moral existence—the voice of uncontrolled nature, heard, as it were, for the first time, — a wild feeling that my destiny was in my own hands. And, after all, Mrs. Vandeleur, surely—but no—that is only one side of the picture !”

“ True, true, my love. I believe that a well-assorted marriage—that is, one where, with perfect esteem and affection, neither party makes any great sacrifice of station or other advantages—may produce the greatest happiness which human nature is capable of enjoying. But there are natural laws of mind, as well as of matter ; there is as surely a moral, as a physical chemistry ; and the combinations which constitute

happiness and virtue, when complete, may, by the addition or loss of one single ingredient, produce misery and remorse. It is to the want of proper skill in, or due attention to, this mental or moral chemistry, that half our sorrows and our sins are owing. And now I would call your attention to the presumption of any individuals' murmuring, because disappointed of the exact portion or kind of felicity which they had struck out for themselves. It is this wayward presumption, which, refusing to take any, because it cannot have all, makes unhappiness out of what ought only be a matter of quiet, patient acquiescence. Duty, circumstances—everything forbids your union with my son; banish it then at once and for ever from your thoughts. Let him continue hereafter your friend, or your acquaintance, according as you may deem proper; and show me, and show yourself, that no selfish feeling has the power to turn you aside from the duties of your high station. Prove that to know your duty, and to fulfil it, are one and



the same with you." She paused, and remained with her anxious eyes riveted, as they had been throughout, upon the downcast but attentive countenance of her hearer.

Lady Seaton spoke not for a few minutes ; but then, with a very low sigh, and a peculiar smile of cold but decisive resignation, and without raising her eyes, she said, " It shall be so, my dearest Mrs. Vandeleur ; but surely it does not follow that I must marry another ?"

" I think it does, from the same course of reasoning. I think it your duty to your father, and to your situation in life, that you should marry. The social compact is a chain composed of many links, or rather, a complicated machine, of which each separate part has a duty to perform, which works together for the general good ; and I do not think that, as society is regulated at present, any individual has a right to seek his or her own selfish gratification, regardless of its effects upon that society, unless they are prepared to forego every advantage



also which they derive from it. In a savage state, indeed, where man is willing to owe his pleasures and his subsistence to the labour of his own hands, and where he has only them to afford him protection from his fellow-savages, he is free to follow the bent of his inclinations : but I would it could be proved how long the love, that we are here disposed to break through all social, if not all moral laws to gratify, would stand amid the universal wreck and chaos of those laws !”

“ But, Mrs. Vandeleur, there is yet a point to be considered, and I blush to have subjected myself to the necessity ;” and she did blush to intensity, and pressed her hands upon her temples. “ But do you not think that I have committed myself in some degree to Captain Vandeleur ?”

“ Most unreservedly I can say, I do not, my child. Some vain and giddy boy might perhaps have drawn some such flattering conclusion from your agitation, and even from the few

words that passed ; but sure I am, that Godfrey never caught a glimpse of such hopes. No, no ; not heroism itself could enable him to endure the overthrow of such hopes, one moment indulged in.—No ; he probably guesses what your feelings are towards the duke, and thinks that the hurry of your spirits threw you a little off your usual dignified bearing, and suffered the Marquis of Hampton's heiress to be a moment forgotten in the confiding woman.”

“ But he saw that I did not resent his expressions of—of——deep regard.”

“ You had been to blame if you had resented them : there was enough on your part to call for all he uttered, (you see—you know that I always speak the exact truth,) and as he presumed no farther, I can scarcely even regret what has passed ; it has brought the matter to its little climax, and, I hope, its end. Nor do I tell you now that you should shun poor Godfrey, or he you. I believe neither of you can ever think better of the other than you do at

this moment ; and when hope is over, as in your well-regulated mind it will be from this day, and as in his it never existed, or at least will not survive the knowledge of your engagement, I believe that time, while it cements your friendship and esteem, will gradually deprive it of all warmer colouring. I am aware that to some weak and frivolous spirits, who could not answer for their own resolutions, or rather for the stability of their principles, beyond the moment of discussion, this might be dangerous indulgence : but with you, my noble pupil, I think it entirely depends on whether the pleasure of his society is, or is not, too dearly purchased by the little regret you will perhaps often feel through life—not that he is not your husband, but that your husband is not like him. But I am so far from thinking that a subdued and momentary regret of that kind is inconsistent with our highest duties as wives, that I look on it as wild and dangerous romance to teach a girl that she should not marry any

man except the one she thinks superior to all others. Nothing that is false can be desirable or right : and think how few marriages could take place were this conscientiously observed ! and it is a bad and dangerous principle to make anything a point of conscience that is not to be strictly observed,—if possible, even enforced. The sort of happiness allotted for you, my beloved girl, does not seem to be that of mutual and rapturous love in your wedded life ; then turn your thoughts to some other source for it ; and I as sincerely believe, as I ardently pray, that you may have as much, and even perhaps far more than that could have afforded to you.”

Mrs. Vandeleur ceased, and perceiving Lady Seaton to be rather disposed to deep reflection on what had passed, than to uttering any observation or comments upon it, she rose, pressed her lips upon her forehead, and left the room. Once she paused at the door, to consider whether or not she should say to Lady Seaton how fully she was aware of the disinterestedness, and

consequent depth, of her attachment, and therefore could fully appreciate the strength and uprightness of her mind in relinquishing it : but as Lady Seaton herself had never once throughout the conversation made an allusion to it, she properly conjectured that it was more consonant to the loftiness of her character to suffer her own self-approval to be her sole reward.

In a very short time it proved so ; but, in the mean while, the agitation she had undergone, the fever of remorse for having stooped for one dizzy moment from her height, (and who shall say, inconsistent though it may appear, that smothered affections did not also contribute their share ?) brought on an illness which confined her to her chamber, and nearly to her bed, for a fortnight.

What had become of Vandeleur in the mean time ? Anxiety and suspense are words that convey not the least idea of the torture he was undergoing. He was as little vain as any man



alive, and the least presuming; a native pride prevented this. Yet, notwithstanding his proud humility, and notwithstanding his mother's assurances to Lady Seaton that no hope had flashed across his mind, some wild and fluttering anxiety, very closely resembling it, was devouring his heart and brain; but it was so wild, so vague, and, as he thought, so impossible, that he determined not to act in any manner upon it until he should see Lady Seaton again.

For this purpose, he presented himself, day after day, at the door of Lord Hampton's mansion, with a burning cheek and palpitating heart: and when, day after day, he received the same answer, that Lady Seaton was still indisposed, he felt too wretched even to be seen by his mother, and returned home, to fling himself upon his couch, and remain there in agony of mind almost beyond endurance, sometimes until the following morning.

She recovered however, and he was admitted at last to see her. She was seated,



whether by design or otherwise he knew not, in one of the inner apartments of the suite, one to which morning visitors were not generally admitted. When he was announceed, "I shall see him here," she said ; and, as he approached, she rose not from her chair, but held out her hand very kindly to him. He seemed about to kneel before her, but a hasty blush, and almost a start, recalled and restrained him. He took a chair close beside her, and made the tenderest inquiries after her health, yet with a wild anxiety in his manner, and countenance, that distressed her. At length, as if himself unable to endure the state of his feelings, he said, "Lady Seaton, we may be momentarily interrupted—other visitors may elaim your attention ; will you therefore suffer me, however abruptly, to revert to the commencement of your late illness, or at least to the emotion to which I was witness ? and believe me, oh ! believe me, that no impertinent curiosity or even selfish anxiety induces me to this, but solely the glimpse of hope

that broke upon me then, that it might be in my power to serve or obey you in any manner?"

Lady Seaton paused one moment with downcast eyes; then, without raising them, calmly and decisively, though with gentleness, and even kindness, said, "I thank you most sincerely, Captain Vandeleur, but the matter which afflicted me then, and caused me to act so childish—so silly a part, (with a deep blush and a stifled sigh,) is one—in which you could not now render me the slightest service."

The sunburnt soldier turned as pale as death! There was a silence for several minutes, during which Lady Seaton never once raised her eyes from the embroidery on her pocket-handkerchief, which she seemed to be examining with critical minuteness. At last Vandeleur spoke again, and the tones of his voice had suddenly become hoarse and husky; "There is one word more I would say, Lady Seaton, and let it not offend you—God knows how remote from my soul is any feeling that ought to do so!—but something seemed to

weigh upon your mind ; it may not indeed be in my power to relieve it, but I would remind you once more, that life, and all it holds of worth to me, are at your disposal. I owe much to your father ; but there are feelings which man never can, and never ought to sacrifice to any other !” He paused.

Lady Seaton felt that the crisis of her fate and his was at hand. She remembered how much she had herself contributed to, if not wholly induced, any expression of the young man’s carefully controlled feelings ; and she duly appreciated the delicacy with which he intimated them now, under cover of a sentence that might bear the interpretation of only an ardent desire to serve her. She felt that everything called upon her to be explicit, and she therefore said with pointed emphasis and decision, though still in the gentlest and kindest manner that the circumstances admitted of, “ Once more, from my very soul, I thank you, Captain Vandeleur : I esteem and respect you more than almost any

one ; and should an occasion ever occur in which you can serve me, I shall put your friendship to some test, you may believe me ; though never, I trust, to the test of—*disobliging my father !*”

She could not conceal a crimson blush and a slight tremour as she pronounced the last words, but she instantly held out her hand to him. He took it for a moment, but relinquished it without the slightest pressure. She had time, however, to feel that his was cold and clammy. She raised her eyes to his face ; cheeks, forehead, and lips were all of the same livid whiteness.

“ Good God ! Captain Vandeleur,” she exclaimed, starting up, “ you are unwell.”

It was a moment or two before he could answer her ; but, leaning back in his chair, he made an effort to recover himself, and succeeded. Then rising slowly, as if unwilling to relinquish a seat of which he had possessed himself under dominion of such different feelings, he said, “ Farewell then, Countess of Seaton !—God

bless you!—all is as it ought to be; I know and feel that it is so.—Farewell!” And having pronounced these words in a hoarse and smothered voice, he drew from his bosom a small locket, and taking from within it a soft, fair, silken curl, he laid it at Lady Seaton’s feet, and left the room.

A day or two after the foregoing conversation, Lord Hampton observed to Mrs. Vandeleur that her son had deserted their dinner-table, and civilly inquired the cause.

“He is gone out of town, my lord,” she replied, “on a visit to a friend of his at Bath. He charged me with his respects to your lordship, as he did not see you when he called. I expect him again in about a fortnight.”

And he did return; and though perhaps a less frequent, and certainly less animated, visiter at Lord Hampton’s than heretofore, such had ever been the unassuming propriety of his bearing to Lady Seaton, that no eye detected any further change. Nor, except amongst those



who had borne a part in it, did a suspicion ever exist on the great stage of high life, of the little tragedy that was enacted behind its scenes—the birth, and death of a passion, as pure, and which, had circumstances favoured it, had probably been as fervent, as any that ever linked two hearts together.

But what avails it now to say what *might* have been? pass we on to what *was*.

As soon as Vandeleur's leave of absence had expired, he joined his regiment in the North of England; and in about six months after, the news reached him that the Countess of Seaton had become Duchess of Castleton.

Perhaps it would not have been in human nature not to have felt a pang at the intelligence; but certain it is, that there mingled not with that pang, the slightest degree of resentment, or bitterness of feeling, towards her. His own quick sympathies told him all that had passed in her heart upon the subject, and he knew that it had been exactly as she had said



to her governess,—that it was but for one dizzy moment she had thought of the possibility of stooping from her height, however favourable towards him her secret wishes, and admiration of his engaging qualities, long had been. He felt also that, in marrying the duke, there did not linger in her heart one feeling that she would have banished thence; though perhaps, had she been able suddenly to transform that heart, as by degrees she hoped to do, she had caused it to glow with warmer feelings from the first towards him who was now her husband.

For himself, Vandeleur neither felt the same moral obligation, nor was it so essential to his peace of mind, to banish her image from his heart. In fact, the place it occupied there, was so far removed from that which is usually assigned to common love, that it partook far more of a sort of devotional respect, gratitude, and admiration, than of any more selfish feeling. The one hour of weakness, when she felt, (as she herself expressed it,) that her fate was in her

own hands, had indeed kindled in his breast a fever of anxiety, which partook of the nature of suspense, if not of hope : but it was so intensely agitating in its nature, so distracting, so overwhelming, that the change from it even to despair, came, after the first painful paroxysm, like a kind of relief and repose, even as the racking agony of an inflamed wound finds a pause of pain in the extinction of vitality. One permanent effect only the matter left upon his feelings ; which was, to render him much more fastidious in his intercourse with ladies than he had ever been before.

## CHAPTER VIII.

As brother and sister born at one birth,  
So Joy and Sorrow lighted on our earth,  
Link'd to each other by the self-same tie  
Of Nature's deep, mysterious sympathy.  
For though young Joy may, in her wanton pride,  
Gambol a moment from her brother's side,  
If she but once attempt to use her wings,  
He hies, and over her his dusky mantle flings.

ANONYMOUS.

Genius ! thou gift of Heaven, thou light divine,  
Amid what dangers art thou doom'd to shine !  
Oft will the body's weakness check thy force,  
Oft damp thy vigour, and impede thy course ;  
And trembling nerves compel thee to restrain  
Thy nobler efforts to contend with pain !

IT was not until two years had elapsed, after the events recorded in the preceding chapter, that Vandeleur believed it to be even possible, that another being existed, who could have

power to awaken the depth of feeling of which he had by this time learned that his heart was capable.

The circumstances which then induced this belief, were, his regiment being quartered in the neighbourhood of Beauton Park, and his introduction to Gertrude Evelyn.

As he himself declared, however, nothing could, under one denomination, be more different than the kind of love he experienced towards each; that for Lady Seaton partaking of so many different feelings, that the result was rather awful than pleasurable; while, in being accepted as the husband of Gertrude, he felt that he was more perfectly happy, and satisfied with himself, and with the world, than he had ever been before on any occasion; and that he would not have exchanged his present prospects for any others that even his own imagination could have created. Nor, in gaining the first and best affections of that young, ingenuous, and confiding being, did he feel that he made an unsuitable re-

turn, by giving, in exchange for them, those that had already been almost offered to another. In that former intercourse there had been nothing to blight or sear the heart ; on the contrary, it had but gained strength, decision, and concentration, by the discipline it had undergone ; and perhaps never did two persons look forward to becoming votaries at the altar of Hymen, with happier auspices in their favour, than did that gallant soldier, and that lovely being, half child, half woman.

In her composition, what is usually termed *girlhood* seemed to have been forgotten, and the omission to have been atoned for, by her being permitted to retain all the graces of childhood, with the amiable and interesting feelings of young womanhood. The artificial restraints, the tutored propriety, the airs and graces, hopes and fears, of the young lady, were all forgotten ; and Gertrude Evelyn was either the artless playful child of Nature, or, when occasion required it, the delicate and exquisitely feeling woman.

In her own family, indeed, heretofore she had been unappreciated, except by her brother, who, though younger than herself, was, both by nature and education, more matured in his mind and knowledge of mankind. Little as his experience was, his good sense, as well as his affection, told him, that there could not be many people possessed of his sister Gertrude's sweetness of temper, kindliness of heart, and intelligence of mind, or earth must have been a better and a happier world than it was said to be; and he sometimes wondered how his father could overlook, or be insensible to, such a treasure. By Gertrude herself this was unperceived. From her birth she had been accustomed to see it thus; and as it would not have been possible for peevishness itself (and Mr. Evelyn was a good-tempered man,) to have spoken harshly to, or found fault with her, she supposed it to be the common course of things, that she was only to seek for affection, sympathy, and confidence in her brother. She found it, and was happy.



When Major Vandeleur appeared however, matters took another turn: the devoted and respectful love of a man whose manners, and conversation, at once asserted his superiority, raised poor little Gertrude even in her father's estimation; and when his proposals were accepted, she felt that the whole house was changed to her, except Herbert. But her innocent heart, without searching farther explanation, set it all down in some way to Vandeleur, and repaid them all tenfold, by her endearing, because diffusive, happiness.

The very neighbourhood around seemed destined to benefit by its influence; for Mr. Evelyn, by way of causing the time of Major Vandeleur's absence in London to pass less heavily, invited a party of friends to remain in the house, amongst whom were Lady Augusta Starling and her father.

Gertrude would gladly have dispensed with them all, (except perhaps Lady Augusta, who had promised to be her bridesmaid on the

approaching occasion ;) for her brother still continued to be the only one to whom she really opened her heart, and to whom she confided the full extent of her innocent joy in the prospect that was before her. Not a picture was sketched, not a scene imagined, in which Herbert still did not bear a prominent part ; and those skilled in the windings of the human heart would have seen, what she saw not herself, that the prospect of passing her life with one capable of appreciating her, was the chief ingredient in her scheme of happiness, and therefore she could not leave out of it one who, she felt, without knowing it, had ever done so.

But, although she would gladly have dispensed with the presence of strangers at such a moment, her spirits were too buoyant, and her temper too imperturbable, to be long discomposed by them ; and accordingly she went carolling about the house, and joining cheerily in every little plan of amusement, literally like some seraph, whose divine attribute it was to

diffuse happiness through the atmosphere with every waft of his wings !

In this joyous mood, one day, about a month after Major Vandeleur's last letter to his mother, and while they only waited his return for the marriage to take place, she agreed to make one of a gay equestrian party setting out from Beauton for a day's amusement, and which was to be joined, *en route*, by other ladies and gentlemen of the neighbourhood.

The day was bright and beautiful, though the summer was on its wane. But who does not know those delicious *pet-days*, as they are fondly called, of autumn, which, perhaps from the very rarity of their visits and the uncertainty of their continuance, sometimes elevate the spirits more than

“The long sunny lapse of a summer's day light?”

Nothing, at least, could exceed in brilliancy the spirits of the youthful party, who now set out to enjoy one of the loveliest of those lovely days, amidst some of the softest and richest scenery, in rich and luxuriant Eng-

land. As far as the eye could reach, it was feasted, and delighted, with smiling meadows; and with woods whose boughs bent gracefully down, to kiss the beautiful verdure that grew beneath them. Where the objects were too distant for minute observation, the whole was softly bathed in a rich, warm flood of purple haze, which, like the veil of beauty, only served to delight the imagination more.

And whence is this feeling? Can the limited mind of man, even in its revellings, surpass the works of Omnipotence, from which alone he has derived that imagination? — or, did he ever, after the fondest creation of his own fancy, believe for a moment that it was not equalled and surpassed by Nature's real workmanship? No! but the secret charm lies in his own imagination having done the work: "it is mine, and I made it," in the mouth of man, is the secret of all of beauty, and of worth, to him. Nor is it strange that it should be so: there is not a pleasure in Nature for us, except through

the medium either of our senses or mental faculties ; hence the more, and the oftener, they are called into exercise without fatigue, the more constant are our enjoyments. When the eye is already satiated with all it sees, to leave something beyond its reach, so as to call the mental faculties into action also, is, I believe, the simple solution of the question so often asked, Why is it that we always wish to have “ something left to the imagination ? ” and which has sometimes been answered by attributing powers of creation to the mind of man surpassing those of God.

It is the same principle upon which healthy and intelligent children act, when they cast aside the gilded but unmeaning toy, to whirl the rude hoop, or pore over the ingenious puzzle.

This, too, is the secret of that love of novelty, so often imputed to man as a defect, but which, in my mind, only becomes so when it turns, for its gratification, from worthy, to unworthy objects. For ample, ample—far beyond the



limited span of man's 'short hour of existence here, is the field of Nature's wonders, in which he may range with still-increasing pleasure and still-progressing improvement !

“ How happy you must be, Gertrude !” exclaimed Lady Augusta Starling, from the mere excess of her own animal spirits ; and for which, being unable otherwise to account, as, of all human beings, she was the least accustomed to analyse her own sensations, she looked for the solution in her friend's approaching happy marriage.

“ I am indeed happy, most happy,” replied Gertrude, her eyes liquid from the exquisite nature of her enjoyment, and the glowing gratitude of her young heart. “ I am indeed happy : but who could be otherwise than happy, on such a day, and in such lovely scenery—even almost without a *Godfrey* ?” And turning to her brother, she continued in a voice of rapture, her riding-hat pushed back from her beautiful forehead, her cheeks glowing in the warm sunbeams, and her whole Hebe-like countenance sparkling with



delight ; “ Oh ! is it not glorious ?—is not that scene of luxuriant and bountiful Nature enough to make glad the heart of man ? ”

“ It is, and of woman too, it seems,” said Herbert, smiling delightedly at her enthusiasm. “ But tell me, Gertrude, is it true what they say of all earthly happiness, that it is never so prized when it is really within our grasp, as when seen in the distant perspective ? ”

“ It is not, it is not ! ” she exclaimed enthusiastically, and with a smile so beamy as might indeed have been taken as a proof of her own sweet theory. “ There is nothing in true and beautiful Nature to confirm such forebodings—the mere phantoms of some one’s own disordered sensations. Is not happiness ours at this moment, until it is almost palpable, tangible, visible ? and are we not aware of it—grateful for it ? Listen, listen to that enchanting music from the birds around us, so much more delightful than all other music, just because we know it is the voice of happiness. I often fancy that the

throats of birds are little Æolian harps, which, when breathed on by the soft breath of spring and summer, give out the wild sweet music of Nature. Now inhale the breath of these gardens we are passing; look up to the bright beautiful blue of the summer sky, without shutting out all it shines upon; attend for a moment even to the delightful ambling pace which our steeds, as if from the very instinct of harmony, have fallen into, and tell me, is there anything left for the greatest gourmand after happiness to desire?"

"You did ill to choose the word *gourmand*," said Lady Augusta, "seeing that, in affecting to go through the gratification of our senses, you have cheated us of that which we derive from our dinner."

"Nay," said Herbert, "surely you perceive that *taste* is the sense she intends should give a zest to all the others!"

"Thank you, Mr. Evelyn; but I wonder how long 'the feast of reason, and the flow

of soul,' would compensate to English tastes for more substantial fare? I confess, the chief pleasure I derive from all this beauty, order, and cultivation around us, is in the idea of how wealthy and comfortable the people must be, and what excellent breakfasts, dinners, and suppers they can afford to have every day of their lives."

" Oh ! Augusta, how can you be so gross—so material?" said Gertrude, laughing.

" Gross ! material ! Why, that is what you always have recourse to, my most ethereal friend, when I speak plain common sense. But I should like to know how much of all these fine feelings the generality of honest English farmers, that 'staple commodity of the country,' would enjoy if they were excessively hungry? I fancy, then, that a good comfortable brick-house, standing bolt upright, with a reeking chimney that seemed to say ' For further particulars inquire within,' would be the most delightful object in a landscape ; a snuff of nice

roast beef or mutton, the most delicious odour ; and you know, on better authority than mine, that

‘The jingling of glasses all music surpasses.’”

“ Let us put her out of company,” said Gertrude, turning playfully from her, to her brother.

“ Nay, you dare not quarrel with me for that ; for even that young Irish poet, who, in my private opinion, (which, like other people’s, is always at the service of the public,) rivals Vandeleur in your affections ; he—Moore, the author of those exquisite wild melodies, all sentimentalist as he is, and wishing to make us believe that he could live for ever on music and flowers, at the first sight of a smoking chimney betrays his fallen nature, and calls out—

‘ If there’s peace to be found in the world,  
The heart that is humble might hope for it here :’

very rationally thinking that peace and plenty go together.”

“ And so I dare say they do,” said Gertrude : “ but who thinks of *peace* on such a day as this, when all around is rapturous happiness ?

You see, he says it is the *humble* heart which might be content with peace and plenty. I grant you that those who only look for *peace* may require to eke out their sensations with a little feasting now and then, while happiness feeds on its own sweet fancies."

"It cannot last long, then," said Lady Augusta, "if it preys on its own vitals."

"No punning, Augusta: you know we have instituted a fine for that offence."

"But that is not a pun. I protest Gertrude no more knows the definition of a pun, than the good man who thought that an anonymous letter was a pun!"

"Besides," said Herbert, "I think good puns should never be made subjects for fines: they are not only amusing, but show prompt recollection and aptitude, which, if not a talent in itself, at least very nearly approaches to one; to say nothing of the gay humour from which they must always spring, and generally excite."

"I know they rather make me cross than gay,"



said Lady Augusta: “and as for *recollection*, we all know that memory is the faculty of fools.”

“That is another and a far more ridiculous prejudice,” said Herbert: “and, if I might adopt a lady’s style of reasoning, I should beg the question at once, and say that the very adage disproves itself; for, of course, he that wrote against memory had none himself, and yet he was evidently a fool! But a better defence may be to ask—What is all knowledge but a memory of what we have either seen, heard, read, or learned in some way?”

“Gertrude cried out to me, ‘No punning, Augusta!’ so I cry out to you, ‘No prosing, Herbert!’ I would even rather hear Gertrude talking about her happiness, albeit I cannot quite agree with her in living either on flowers or *music*: but I suppose my time will come too for the latter, seeing that in certain stages of every one’s life it serves for food. At present, I shall beg to canter on for my luncheon instead;



since, alas ! though two or three years older than she is, and not much uglier, yet

‘ There’s nobody coming to marry me,  
Nobody coming to woo.’ ”

And giving her sweet voice to the gay words, she whipped her pretty pony into a canter, and was soon pursued at the same pace by the rest of the young party.

Lord Foxhill, and two or three elderly gentlemen, who, like himself, had fallen in with the party from the mere infection of happiness, contented themselves with keeping within hearing of their joyous young voices, which now were all joined in the merry chorus as they cantered along, and which would have communicated a sensation of gladness to age itself.

The gentlemen, if they did not express this feeling to each other, (and perhaps they would scarcely have known how ) acknowledged it in the smile of benevolence that crept over every countenance, as they exchanged looks when the sounds reached their ears, and by the quick-

ened yet gentle trot by which they seemed desirous not to lose a note of it.

Suddenly the chorus ceased—there was a moment's silence—then a piercing shriek. The gentlemen, even at the distance which intervened, could distinguish a halt—a clustering and confusion—and several persons hastily alighting.

Lord Foxhill and his companions galloped forwards in alarm: as they approached, it was confirmed into consternation by the expression of every face they looked on. Two of the youthful party were not to be seen at the first glance; but the next instant, as the gentlemen alighted, and the terrified group who surrounded the principal sufferers, made way for them, they perceived young Evelyn extended on the ground, pale and motionless; whilst his sister Gertrude, not less pale, was kneeling beside him, wildly rubbing his hands, and kissing his lips, alternately, and breathing as if every gasp must exhaust life itself. She looked up as Lord Foxhill approached:—“ See here !” she cried —  
here is an agreeable termination of our ride !”

It was indeed a fearful sight !—There was not the least appearance of any wound, yet not a sign of life was visible. Lord Foxhill raised the youth's head, loosened his neckcloth, chafed his hands, without effect. One of the young men of the party had already galloped off to the town of B—— for a surgeon ; while another was despatched to the nearest cottage in search of a table, or some board, on which to convey the unfortunate young man to his home.

In the mean time Lord Foxhill was able to gather the following account of the accident :—The horse which Herbert had ridden was wild and fiery, and being excited by the noise and cantering about him, had suddenly plunged forward ; and when Herbert, with a master's hand, reined him strongly in, he reared so violently that he fell backwards upon his rider. The horse was instantly dragged up ; but Herbert's head had come against the ground ; and though no visible injury was inflicted, he had never moved since it occurred.

Almost immediately some peasants arrived with a light table and mattress; and on this the boy was laid, and carried homewards by as many as his weight required. Gertrude insisted on walking beside them; and, without uttering a single word, she continued breathing in the same gasping and laboured manner until they arrived at Beauton.

Fortunately Mr. Evelyn was not at the moment in the house; and as the young man who had gone in search of the surgeon soon returned with the intelligence that he was not at home, nor expected until the following day, every remedy that the invention of any of the party could suggest, except the salutary one of bleeding, was resorted to, in hopes of restoring animation before the unhappy father should return.

For a long time all efforts were alike fruitless; but at length they perceived his colour begin to change, and presently a movement of his chest showed that life was not extinct; and by the time that Mr. Evelyn did arrive, the

party, though still agitated and uneasy, were so far recovered from their first alarm as to be able to communicate the account of the accident to him with tolerable calmness. He immediately repaired to his son's apartment; but he, not having been, like the rest, relieved from still more fatal apprehensions, was overwhelmed at the state in which he found him. The boy lay perfectly still, with his eyes closed, and, except by breathing, gave no sign of life. His father called him several times by name without producing the slightest sign of attention; and when at last, in an uncontrollable burst of parental anguish, he cried out between a shout and a scream—"Herbert!—my boy, my boy!" and dropped on his knees beside him, the noise seemed to have just roused him sufficiently to induce him slowly to open his eyes; but instantly they were closed again, and nothing after this seemed to produce the least consciousness.

Mr. Evelyn despatched an express immediately to Major Vandeleur to London, request-



ing him to return with the most eminent medical man he could procure on the instant; and in the mean time every means that could be devised by the family to preserve life by cordials and stimulating draughts were resorted to; and thus was increased the pressure on the brain, already but too powerful.

Gertrude never left his bedside, although he never for one moment showed the least sign of being conscious of her presence. When entreated to take any food or drink that was presented to him, he seemed not only as if he understood not, but as if he did not even hear: yet, when his lips were gently opened, and liquid put into his mouth, he swallowed it without much apparent effort.

He continued in this state during the remainder of that day and night: and about ten o'clock next morning Major Vandeleur arrived, bringing with him Dr. C——, a surgeon and physician, at that time eminent in the medical world, but who has since fallen a victim to his profes-



sional labours. They entered the young man's chamber together ; and so absorbed was Gertrude in watching the countenance of her beloved brother, and listening to his breathing, and so utterly regardless of what was passing round her, and of who came in, and who left the room, that they had advanced to the bedside, and gazed a moment on the patient, before she perceived that Major Vandeleur was arrived.

Gertrude was new to grief and new to sickness. She saw that something very unusual was the matter with her brother ; she saw it even by the anxiety of those around her : but yet, as he did not seem to suffer pain, she flattered herself that they were all, herself included, unnecessarily alarmed ; and she had looked forward with a vague, undefined hope to Major Vandeleur's arrival, as if some one who had not been present at the first shock must prove a better, a more favourable judge.

What, then, were her sensations, when a stifled groan causing her to look up, she per-

ceived at once the dismay and anguish with which he too gazed upon the object of their mutual and nearly equal affection ! She uttered a piercing shriek, and, springing to his arms, pressed her hand wildly over his eyes, as if by shutting out that agonised look, the object that excited it could be rendered less sad ; then burst into a flood of tears, the first that had come to her relief since the accident had occurred. They flowed now in a profusion that threatened suffocation ; and by the orders of Mr. C—— she was conveyed to her own apartment, where, by the aid of soothing anodynes, her shattered nerves found rest at last in heavy sleep.

For several succeeding days Herbert Evelyn manifested but very slight symptoms of amendment. By degrees, however, he did improve ; his appetite, and with it his strength, began to return ; and yet, to the astonishment of those around him, Mr. C—— in each succeeding visit seemed less and less satisfied with his progress.

He changed his mode of treatment again and again, and finally tried in succession every plan that skill, judgment, or experience could suggest; but still the effect he wished for was not produced; and at length, with all the delicacy and kind consideration which the heart-rending circumstance admitted of, he communicated to Major Vandeleur, that although the boy's life was no longer in any danger, and his bodily health tolerably restored, he greatly feared that there was some injury inflicted on the brain which was at present beyond the power of the medical art to remove. But while he thus gently endeavoured to prepare Major Vandeleur for his continuing in the listless—alas! almost idiotic state in which he had been ever since the accident, he held out hopes that, as his constitution strengthened, and his growth increased, better prospects might be looked for. In the mean time, as soothing and affectionate attention, with the careful absence of anything that might irritate or alarm him, was all that could prove

serviceable, he intimated that further attendance on his part was unnecessary.

Major Vandeleur stood aghast at this announcement. He had for some time past remarked how listless, and unobservant of everything around him, Herbert had appeared; but the fearful idea of his mental faculties being permanently injured had never come across him. Death itself would have appeared a less dreadful change, than to behold that intellectual and gifted being converted in a moment into a helpless idiot. His muscular frame shook with the violence of his emotion, and he again asked Mr. C—— if he had indeed any hope of his final restoration. Mr. C—— again assured him that there was no reason to think that it might not be so; but as it would come on, if at all, by slow and imperceptible degrees, it was absolutely necessary to prepare his friends for what they were to expect, and the treatment they were to pursue.

Major Vandeleur left the house with Mr. C——, and accompanied him part of the way

to town, for the purpose as well of taking further directions concerning Herbert, as to delay as long as possible the misery of communicating such disastrous tidings to his father and sister. Finally, he resolved within himself, that the best plan would be to hint it as well as he could to Mr. Evelyn, but to suffer it to break by degrees upon the young and innocent Gertrude, whose nerves were already too much shaken to allow him to risk the additional agitation which such a communication must produce in her at present.

In pursuance of this plan, he sought out Mr. Evelyn, and with as much tenderness and judgment as if he were indeed his son, and the youth his only brother, he informed him that he must not look for as speedy a restoration of the boy's usual liveliness, and brightness of intellect, as they could wish; but failed not to hold out the utmost extent of hope that Mr. C——'s authority permitted him. Veil it as he might, however, the shock was overwhelming; and the gal-



lant soldier could not contain his own tears, as he heard the loud sobs of the afflicted father.

“My beautiful boy ! my beautiful boy ! of whose talents and acquirements I was so proud, though scarcely myself capable of appreciating them !—and his poor doting sister !”

They were the kindest words Vandeleur had ever heard him utter concerning his daughter, and he hastened to take advantage of them, and to divert the poor man’s attention to anything in which it could avail. “Ay, there is indeed the point to consider,” said he ; “there is indeed the point for consideration and self-control.”

He then communicated to him his idea of its being better to suffer the melancholy truth to dawn by degrees upon her mind, than to startle her by any intimation of it, however tenderly conveyed, since, to her, no hint for cautious or watchful attention could be necessary. Mr. Evelyn agreed with him in this ; and as soon as he hoped he had gained some composure



and command over himself, he repaired with him to the chamber of the youth.

Herbert was now accustomed to sit up for some hours of every day in an arm-chair, but preserved almost unbroken silence, and could seldom be prevailed upon even to answer any question. Yet, as his family, accustomed to this from the first, had never until now formed the slightest surmise of his real situation, they had hitherto attributed his silence to mere bodily exhaustion, or to some internal suffering which had not yet been removed. Gertrude was the only one of whom he ever appeared to take the slightest notice,—if notice it could be called, that he sometimes, when apparently deaf to the entreaties of every one else to swallow some nourishment or medicine, when she spoke, would hold out his hand for it, but without speaking or raising his eyes. Once or twice he was seen to look at her ; but if she happened to meet his eyes, it seemed too much for him, and he slowly withdrew them. She

had indeed more than once inquired if it were not strange that, as his appetite and strength returned, he showed no farther signs of recovery ; but her questions had been easily evaded, while the truth had yet never flashed on any of them.

When Major Vandeleur and Mr. Evelyn entered the room after the fatal communication had been made, the poor boy raised his eyes listlessly, and continued for a moment to look towards the door, as if he expected some one else to enter—probably Mr. C—— ; but, not perceiving him, he merely cast them down again, without the slightest uttered observation. His father sat down beside him.

“ Do you miss your kind physician, my dearest Herbert ?” he asked, fondly taking his hand between both his, and looking into his face.

The boy made no reply, but looked on him with an eye from which all intelligence was fled. His father continued : “ He is returned to London ; he thinks you now quite well, my boy.”

No answer yet, save a weak and almost fatuous smile. His father, in the newly-awakened consciousness of his dreadful state, could endure it no longer, but, hastily rising, fled from the apartment, that he might not betray his emotion. The boy once more raised his eyes at the sudden movement ; and a faint tinge which came over his pale, gentle face, shot a ray of hope into the heart of Vandeleur, that even that faint blush betokened some natural emotion.

But, except this very faint indication, days and days passed on without the slightest change, except that, for the last two or three, he was heard to mutter to himself, but so low, or so incoherent, that no one wished to think they heard him aright : and when, as day by day they hung over him, and could not catch one connected sentence, even Gertrude began to experience a strange palpitation at her heart whenever he attempted to speak ; and he himself, poor fellow ! as if finding how ineffectual were his

efforts to make known his wishes, or to express his ideas, or else finding the effort too painful, abandoned it altogether, and fell back into his former listless and silent state. Gertrude now began to grow alarmed, without well knowing on what point to fix her fears. She asked why Mr. C—— had abandoned them? And on being told that he considered Herbert as nearly well, she sighed deeply, and once said, “I hope not !” And latterly, when he attempted any incoherent speech, she would fix her melancholy eyes on her father and Major Vandeleur alternately, with a look of such agonised and piercing inquiry, (as if to search the very truth of their souls,) that they not unfrequently found it very difficult to avoid replying to their touching language.

At last, as she came up one evening as usual from the dining-room to her brother’s apartment before the gentlemen, and took her place beside his arm-chair, after contemplating him for a moment in anxious silence, she laid her hand

upon his arm, and endeavoured to attract his attention by asking him if he would like to hear her read to him. He turned slowly round, and softly pronounced, in a kind of whisper, the word "Gertrude."

It was the first time he had ever seemed to recognize any one by name; and the poor girl was so much affected by it, that she burst into tears, and, throwing herself into his arms, exclaimed, "Dearest, dearest Herbert!"

It appeared that even that gentle embrace was too rough for the slight dawn of recollection: he shuddered from her touch, and literally shaking with alarm and terror, he distinctly uttered the words "Go away."

Language cannot do justice to the poignancy of Gertrude's distress and disappointment at this deathblow to her newly-awakened hopes. She rushed out of the room, and meeting Major Vandeleur upon the stairs, she hid her face upon his shoulder, and sobbed forth, "Godfrey, my brother is—is—not himself!"



Vandeleur was deeply affected: he felt at once from her manner of uttering these words, that they were rather the confession of fears long entertained, than the transitory alarm of a moment. He folded her to his heart, and whispered every consolation that love could suggest. But it was all too late—the Rubicon was passed; and they talked and wept together over the loss of an intellect once so brilliant.

Gertrude was for some days nearly inconsolable, and was obliged to absent herself almost entirely from her brother's room, until her mind had become in some degree accustomed to view him in this new and heart-rending light. By degrees, however, the ardour and buoyancy of spirit natural to her age and character, aided by her lover's arguments, enabled her to rouse herself from the lethargy of despair, and she began to turn all her thoughts to how she might best "minister to the mind diseased." She soon succeeded in persuading herself, that where a being's whole heart, soul, mind, and feelings,



were concentrated on one object, it was not possible that he or she should not at last accomplish what was desired.

“Is not this the triumph of mind over matter,” she said, “of which I have sometimes heard my beloved Herbert speak?”

“Yes: but we must remember, dearest Gertrude,” said her lover, “that there is a Mind that can triumph over our minds, and whose ways are not always our ways.”

END OF THE FIRST VOLUME.









